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LETTERS
FROM
John Wilbur to George Crosfield.
WITH
SELECTIONS
FROM OTHER OF
His Writings and Correspondence

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REPUBLICATION

OF THE

LETTERS

OF

John Wilbur to George Crosfield;

TOGETHER WITH SOME

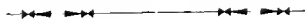
SELECTIONS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE
AND OTHER WRITINGS;

WITH AN

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

BY THE MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS OF NEW ENGLAND
YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS,

1879.



PROVIDENCE:
J. A. & R. A. REID, PRINTERS.
1879.

THE Committee having in charge the matter of the republication of the Letters of our late friend John Wilbur to George Crosfield, with some selections from other of his publications, for the clearing of Truth and the vindication of our ancient principles, produced a report recommending the same ; to include some extracts from his correspondence, of letters from valnable and weighty Friends of the last generation, bearing a lively testimony against unsoundness in doctrine, with an introductory essay to the same. The report and the extracts named, with the introductory essay having been read and duly considered, the publication is approved, and the same Committee are continued to have the care of the issue and circulation of such number of copies as to them shall seem best.

Extracted from the minutes of the Meeting for Sufferings of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, held at Newport, Rhode Island, 6th, mo. 14th, 1879, by

JEREMIAH FOSTER, *Clerk.*

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

THE present condition of the religious Society of Friends is so anomalous and so degenerate, as scarcely to fail to awaken in the mind of every thoughtful and rightly concerned member, feelings of sadness and alarm ; amid which we are carried back in retrospect to a period within the recollection of some now living — that of the breaking out of the Hicksite heresy, about fifty years ago. This event had been foreseen and foretold by some of the truly gifted and faithful of the Lord's messengers, and brought the rightly concerned members under great exercise and suffering, in which it was clearly seen that there had been an undue shrinking from faithful labor with those who were adopting and covertly advocating novel and deistical views, until the current had become too strong and impetuous to be resisted or overcome short of an open rupture. When this took place it was plainly seen by the clear-sighted that the schism was caused by a radical departure from the original principles of the society ; yet there arose in connection with it questions of order and discipline, on which there was manifested a difference of opinion as to how far we may tolerate a divergence of sentiment or principle, before submitting to a separation, which some seemed to regard as almost the greatest calamity that could

befall the society. The strength of this view was such, it is believed, as greatly to obstruct and paralyze the efforts of sound Friends in standing against the apostasy in principle. Whether the smaller number of members adhering to the true principles of the society, notwithstanding the defection of much the greater portion of their fellow-members, should be acknowledged and accepted, as the true bodies of Friends seemed to be finally settled in the case of New York and Baltimore Yearly Meetings, in both which the sound Friends were in the minority, yet the smaller and sound bodies were recognized as legitimate, and the larger and unsound were rejected as spurious; thus establishing the position — the correctness of which cannot be questioned — *that the separatists are they who separate themselves from the doctrines and testimonies of the Society, whether they be few or many.*

We do not propose to dilate on the sorrowful consequences of this departure from the ancient and well-established principles of the society, or the widespread schism that followed — these being now too well understood to require further elucidation. But it is evident that whilst guarding against error on the one hand, the danger of falling into it on the other was too much overlooked and disregarded. The unsoundness of Elias Hicks and his adherents, consisted or resulted in a denial of the Divinity and offices of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in that prepared body, in which he came to do His Father's will, and to suffer the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God — of the benefit of his sacrifice without the

gates of Jerusalem ; thus placing him merely in the category of good men ; a purely deistical doctrine. But ere this storm had fully passed over, there was discovered by the anointed eye, a divergence of some in high standing in the opposite direction ; among whom was Joseph John Gurney, of Norwich, England, who wrote voluminously on doctrinal subjects, and who even in some of his works which were submitted to, and passed the Meeting for Sufferings, covertly introduced certain unsound sentiments, which, as Friends were mainly looking for error, on the other hand were overlooked. Encouraged and emboldened by this, in his succeeding works he ventured further, and finally so great was his popularity that some of his works were suffered to be printed and published without the customary required revision. In these, many doctrinal views were put forth inimical to those held and published by our early and standard writers, among which are these : That Christ himself is not the true light that lighteth the heart or inner man, but outwardly the Enlightener ; and that the obvious tendency of the former view is to deprive the Saviour of his personal attributes, and to reduce him to the rank of a principle, a consequence often attempted to be pressed upon our first Friends by their enemies, and as often refuted. He held that the gospel of Christ is not the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, but only an outward declaration or record of that which is the power of God. He taught justification by faith, and *that* faith independent of the spirit which regenerates the heart, and of obedience. That there is no correct divinity but that which is borrowed from

the Bible — that the spirit is a person — and he held to the resurrection of the body, and that Christ's second appearance without sin unto salvation to them who look for him as declared by the apostle, is nothing more nor less than his future coming in glory to judge the quick and dead ; with much more of a similar bearing and tendency. Others, as Elisha Bates, Isaac Crewdson, Edward Ash, and Robert Charleton, have gone still further in the same direction, and other departures from our original principles have followed, and from time to time been broached — sometimes in a covert and insidious manner, then again more or less open, though not often official ; but we learn that the Binns or Gurney division of Ohio Yearly Meeting last year by minute of its select meeting made this bold declaration : “ We repudiate the so-called doctrine of the inner light or the gift of a portion of the Holy Spirit in the soul of every man, as dangerous, unsound, and unscriptural.” In this strong and unequivocal language they take open issue with George Fox and the early Friends and clearly place themselves on other ground, against which the early Friends were concerned to bear a decided and faithful testimony. And yet strange and inconsistent as it is, and must ever be, those who have adopted the radically opposite views of Gurney and others, claim to be the true society of Friends — genuine successors of those bright and shining lights who were raised up to revive the very doctrine they now repudiate and denounce. As a result, we now see many of the meetings of professed Friends conducted much in the way of those of other professors ; wherein the young and

inexperienced are urged to come forward and speak in the name of the Lord ; and this is held up not only as a duty, but as an evidence of advancement in real devotional exercise and of genuine discipleship. Nor does it stop here, but singing is being introduced as a necessary or desirable part of divine worship ; and the young are encouraged to learn to sing in order to become useful and devoted members of the society. Hence, as a necessary consequence, little of that solemn and reverent silence, so characteristic of a Friends' meeting, is now practiced or experienced by those who have followed in this apostate direction, the time being almost entirely occupied in vocal utterance, either in relating experience, in exhortation, in prayer, or in singing ; and it requires little penetration to see, that between this and instrumental music, there is but a short step, especially when we see it as we do, largely introduced into the family circle.

Then, again, the matter of a paid ministry is beginning to be introduced and discussed in some of the Yearly Meetings ; all which affords abundant evidence of a retrograde movement towards that vortex of formality and lifelessness out of which our faithful predecessors were called, and out of which they were delivered as with an high Hand and an outstretched Arm. While some clear-sighted watchmen on the walls of our Zion early saw the tendency and the evident aim of those who were introducing innovations in doctrine and practice, and faithfully testified against them, and warned Friends of the consequences which they clearly foresaw would follow, there were many others, some of whom were undoubtedly

honest, seeing the array of great names on the side of the innovators, and well knowing their influence and power in the Society, shrank from the idea of meeting them in controversy, and tried to persuade themselves that there was, after all, not so much occasion for alarm as some thought, and, that if let alone, the current of innovation would spend its force without any serious result; and, greatly dreading any commotion or jar, like that occasioned by Hicksism; giving away to the idea that even *that* would have been less destructive if it had been more gently and cautiously handled. This timid and temporizing policy made the way of those valiants who more clearly saw the danger, and felt the necessity laid upon them to stand firmly against it, doubly hard. They were censured as disturbers of the peace of the Church, were placed under the ban of committees, dealt with as offenders, and some finally disowned for their allegiance to the right and the true, to the law and the testimony. Seeing this, the weak and the fearful became still more discouraged, and so far turned their backs in the day of battle as to enable the enemies of Truth to triumph; so the matter seems now to have passed beyond the reach of remedy within the pale of the society; and there appears little left for those who remain true to the ancient faith and way, but to flee for their lives, as was testified by John Justice, a Pennsylvania Friend, before this storm arose; for now, as before the former, there were a few who were favored to foresee and forewarn Friends of its approach, and the devastation following in its track; of which number was the Friend named.

He resided in the country, but felt moved, though in feeble health, to attend a meeting in the city (Philadelphia), in which, though from bodily weakness unable to rise from his seat without help, he in a remarkable testimony spoke prophetically of a day of trial, shaking and falling away among Friends, which he saw approaching—alluded to the trials and devastation occasioned by the Hicksite heresy and said: “Has there not something got in and is spreading amongst us, that is even more awful than anything we have ever yet had to pass through?” After much in this way very remarkably pertinent to the times, he had to declare that there would be a remnant preserved, to whom he was led very sweetly to minister; and concluded by expressing for the second time these words:—

“Those who are preserved in this time, will be as it were upon broken pieces of the ship.”

There were many others, also, who, in the visions of light saw the approach of the storm, and raised a warning voice against it, among whom were some of the first standing and religious experience in the Society—such as Thomas Shillitoe, George and Ann Jones, John and Lydia Ann Barclay, Sarah Lynes Grubb, Daniel Wheeler, George Crosfield, John Harrison, Jonathan Evans, Ezra Comfort, Christopher Healy, Samuel and Henry Cope, Hinchman Haines, Ebenezer Roberts, and John Wilbur; the latter of whom, from the fact that he was the first, if not to discern, the first publicly to expose the introduction of this spirit of retrogression and unsoundness into the Society, became a peculiar mark for the

arrows of the archers. He made a religious visit to Great Britain in 1831-2, and while engaged in this service, he appears clearly to have seen the coming heresy, and near the conclusion of his stay in England he wrote a series of letters, which were subsequently published, warning his fellow-members against its grievous effects, clearly setting forth the true principles of the Christian faith, as held by our first Friends and all their faithful followers. He returned from this visit greatly afflicted in view of the sad condition of the Society of Friends in that land where it was first planted and raised up. This is a well remembered expression of his after his return: "*There is something at work among Friends in England, which, if it cannot be arrested, will land the Society on the same ground from whence our forefathers first took their departure.*" We now see this prediction in rapid course of fulfillment, so that there seems to be little left for those who have been favored to see, and to struggle against this current of apostasy, but to close in with the consoling invitation of the Lord through the mouth of his prophet, "come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast,"—Isaiah 26, 20. But some of those faithful watchmen who have foreseen and foretold of these days, have also been favored in the visions of light to see beyond—to behold a better day, and to proclaim that if those whom the Lord has called, and whom he has favored with an understanding of what is required at their hands, whom he has blessed in many ways, and whom

he has designed for the kingdom, shall turn away backward and from a love of this present world, refuse to endure the cross and despise the shame, they will be left to grope their way in darkness, the end of which is sorrow and death; and there will be called in to take their places, even as from the highways and hedges, those who are made willing to endure hardness as good soldiers, so that his house will be filled, and a standard erected, to which there will be a flocking as "doves to the windows;" and "his name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place shall incense be offered unto his name, and a pure offering." The aforementioned letters of John Wilbur which were addressed to his friend George Crosfield, of Liverpool, brought down upon the writer a mighty storm of censure and reprobation from many prominent characters, both in England and in his own country, who, in order to undermine primitive Quakerism, endeavored to confound it with Hicksism, and thus to bring it into disrepute. And in the determined effort to set aside some of the fundamental principles of the Society and to introduce others of opposite character and tendency in place of them, some of the plainest provisions of the discipline were disregarded, both in letter and spirit, until a separation was brought about in New England Yearly Meeting, as was evidently intended, in case this unrighteous purpose could not be effected without it. *

For the information of the present or rising generation of Friends, it seems proper to state that after the

* See J. Wilbur's "Narrative and Exposition," also his "Journal and Correspondence."

publication of these letters John Wilbur was accused, pursued and treated with as an offender, for the faithful testimony which he with other zealous watchmen in accordance with an injunction of our christian discipline, continued to bear against the unsound and innovating sentiments of Gurney and others, which he saw industriously disseminated throughout the society ; and his Monthly Meeting which sustained him, was laid down in a manner contrary to the plain and specific provisions of the discipline, and he was finally disowned by another Monthly Meeting to which his, at the time of its dissolution was attached. For a full and clear account of these transactions see his "Narrative and Exposition" which he proceeded to publish soon after his disownment. The clear and lucid statements therein made have never been refuted ; and any person, Friend, or other, who may desire to become availed of the information thus furnished, will be amply rewarded by a perusal of this extraordinary and truthful volume. It is believed that it is not going too far to say that the proceedings therein narrated exceed in unreasonableness and severity on the part of members of the Society of Friends anything in its history ; and that they are, and will remain a lasting stigma and reproach on the leaders and instigators of them in all coming time. And in order further to show the meek and quiet spirit by which he continued to be actuated, and in which he endured these accumulated trials and afflictions at the hands of false brethren, we feel that it is but just to his memory and a solace and encouragement to the faithful, both of the present and future ages, to republish

some portion of the truly christian and affectionate remarks contained in the introduction, and the entire conclusion of the "Narrative and Exposition" feelingly commending them to the serious consideration of every honest and reflecting mind.

The edition of his letters published by George Crossfield was small, and the influence against them so potent that their circulation even in England was very limited, and but few copies reached this country. They were, however, republished as an appendix to his journal, but that was voluminous and costly, and like the letters was everywhere spoken against by the leaders in nearly all the Yearly Meetings, so that they have failed to get any general circulation. It is believed that the time has fully come for a new edition which this meeting has now decided to put forth, leaving the candid reader to decide whether they were written under right authority and at the right time; which in our judgment the present lapsed condition of our religious society, as may be said, throughout its length and breadth, so clearly foreseen and pointed out, conclusively proves to have been so. As a fitting conclusion to these remarks, and in order to show more fully the deep exercises which John Wilbur passed through before writing these letters, we will quote a few passages from his own account taken from his journal. In speaking of his attendance of London Yearly Meeting in 1832, after mentioning that with the exception of his having visited the women's meeting, he had been silent through all the meetings for discipline, being greatly exercised therein, he says, "In this meeting great professions of faith in the

mediation and atonement of Jesus Christ our Lord, were made, and this profession was abundantly reiterated ; but still I mournfully felt a great want of that precious sweetness and savor of life, which gives weight and solidity as well as power to a meeting ; and without which all the professions of faith however high and glowing as to words, are but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. And I am more and more confirmed in the belief that the most full and literally sound acknowledgement may be made of faith in the blood and sacrifice of Jesus Christ our blessed Redeemer, and without any reserve, too ; but still it may be no more than in the oldness of the letter, and that [this is so] for want of believing fully in, and of being really and practically quickened by the living power of the gospel, that calls to, and enables to keep the commandments of Christ our Lord, by whose spirit and grace we are sanctified through obedience. For those who livingly believe, are thus sanctified through obedience ; and those who are thus sanctified, cannot be otherwise than believers.”

“On account of overwhelming afflictions and weakness of body, I was not able to attend the concluding sitting of the Select Yearly Meeting ; for my mental grief was such that I could not refrain from excessive weeping, after the conclusion of the Meeting for Discipline ; so under the kind superintendence of my friend, George Crosfield, I went immediately to my lodgings and retired to my chamber where my head was as waters and mine eyes as fountains of tears, in weeping for the backsliding of the sons and daughters of my people, occasioning the face of the Beloved to

be so turned from us in the day of our great necessity.”
— Pages 123 and 124.

Again, after attending the Half-Year's Meeting for Wales, which was he says a painful meeting to him throughout, he remarks that “ a public meeting was proposed for Elizabeth Fry, and appointed for the evening, of which I had no sight, and being indisposed I kept to my chamber, and there mourned over the state of things in this land, being fully aware that there are many in the station of ministers who are in a great measure lost as to the times and seasons, the openings and the shuttings of the blessed spirit of the gospel, and whose minds seem to be so beclouded and darkened that the true shining is not seen to go forth with brightness as in primitive times, nor as a lamp that should burn through the whole gospel day ; and it is greatly to be feared that there are some who are leaning too much to their own understanding, instead of waiting in patience and meekness on Jesus Christ, the great minister, who always keeps the key in his own hands, and openeth only when he will, and to whom he will.” . . . “ So I continue to mourn, and to feel like adopting the prophet's subsequent language of grief as I pass through this land, ‘ How is the gold become dim ! how is the most fine gold changed ! The stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street ! The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter !’ For lo ! some who have shone apparently as stars of the first magnitude, seem to be in danger of a total eclipse ! The outward standing and influence

of some is such, that the case seems almost, if not entirely irremediable, and what the result of things will be is difficult to foresee; but many there are among this people who are truly awakened to serious and fearful apprehensions lest this society should be shaken from its foundation." — Page 137. Not long afterwards he remarks: "A disposition is making its appearance in divers places in this nation and among Friends, to think very little of the cross of Christ practically, and to plead for liberality both of faith and practice; — the perceptible influence of the Holy Spirit is mournfully deprecated by many members of our Society, some of them in conspicuous standing are now disposed to put the scriptures in the place of the Spirit, and seem ready to hold them as the only rule of faith and practice or guidance of Christians. This dereliction from principle and innovation upon the always acknowledged doctrines of our Society, must have originated in the insidious wiles of the enemy — a want of experience, and of the true knowledge of God through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and by having their minds darkened through disobedience and unbelief in the true shining of the everlasting light and gospel of Christ; thus becoming disposed to throw off and reject the needful restraints of it; and, notwithstanding they fully acknowledge the propitiatory sacrifice, with its blessed effects for the remission of sins, and place great dependence upon it, yet at the same time, Christ crucified is to them, as to the Jews and Greeks formerly, to the one a stumbling block, and to the other foolishness. And there is much reason to fear

that these wise and learned professors under our name, who seem disposed to look down rather contemptuously upon the old sort of Friends, are designing to bring about a change in some of the prominent and essential doctrines of our Society — such as the ministry and worship ; than which there can hardly be any two named, subordinate to that of faith in God and in the Lord Jesus Christ, which are more essential to the preservation and support of our religious compact. It is very evident that if we should come to believe that the Scriptures of themselves are a sufficient guide in all the walks of a Christian life, then our silent, spiritual worship will ere long sink into disuse, and our faith in the immediate renewing of the Divine Spirit, on every occasion of the ministry, will be exploded. This result is a consequence that must unavoidably follow such a faith concerning the Holy Scriptures, however excellent they are, in subordination to the Spirit which gave them forth.” — Page 151.

At London and Middlesex Quarterly Meeting, which was very full and large, the great weight of this concern continued to press heavily upon him. Of this meeting he says, “Dear Ann Jones was exercised in solemn supplication, and William Allen and Daniel Wheeler, in testimony acceptably ; but as for me I sat silently, under a sorrowful sense of the state of things in this land ; for it is clearly to be felt and seen that among this people, under our name, there are two armies arrayed, army against army, lifting up their weapons one against the other ; and great struggles are plainly to be felt and seen, by those whose eyes are happily anointed by the finger of Jesus. It is

seen also that instead of one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, there is a diversity of faith as regards the ministration of Him who is one by his holy, spiritual baptism, and as to the worship of the true tabernacle. And it is greatly to be feared that this strife will not always be kept within the secret chamber and subdued without the exposure of Anti-Christ and his kingdom, and without a storm of the elements in which he worketh; and much commotion, and thundings, and lightnings, and earthquakes will be seen and heard in divers places, and the tabernacle of those who have slidden from the sure foundation, the Rock of Ages, however lofty and beautiful to look upon, will be thrown down and removed out of the way, and their place will be known no more in the heritage of the Lord's spiritual Israel." — Page 157.

Under these sorrowful apprehensions, and in deep solicitude for the safety of the Society, he wrote the following letters:—

LETTERS

ON SOME OF THE PRIMITIVE DOCTRINES OF CHRISTIANITY. BY JOHN WILBUR.

“ Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”—PHIL. IV. 8.

PREFACE.

IN publishing the following letters, it is necessary that I should briefly state some of the reasons which have induced me thus to give a more extended circulation to what was originally only a private communication of sentiment.

They contain the views of a Friend who, during his visit and gospel labors in this land, was often led into deep exercise and solicitude on subjects of great interest and importance to our religious society. The views which he has taken, and the sentiments he has expressed, are, in my judgment, well calculated to afford instruction and profit ; and to support the ancient doctrines and testimonies of our society ; nor can I doubt but they will be acceptable to, and be well received by all who wish these doctrines and testimonies to be maintained in their ancient purity. Yet to others who may be shun-

ning the cross, and the narrow way, and seeking for themselves and their children more liberty ; endeavoring to combine what are altogether irreconcilable, the grandeur and friendships of this world with the plain and simple way of truth, I expect some of the sentiments contained in this work, will be very unpalatable.

A recurrence to our first principles is at all times profitable and advantageous ; the present day abounds with writings, both of a religious nature and others, much mixed with opinions and sentiments very different from those held by us as a society ; and whilst these books are extensively read amongst us, there is reason to fear that the perusal of them tends much to the exclusion of the writings of our own society ; that thus loss is sustained by many of our members, who are more deficient than they ought to be, in the knowledge of our principles on various important points ; a more extended acquaintance with these principles, and a more strict adherence to the testimonies of the society, are much to be desired, and would be of great benefit.

The following Letters are calculated to impart such knowledge, and to promote such an adherence, and I publish them with the hope that these may be their effects — that they may be read with a desire to be instructed, and to profit by the sentiments they inculcate.

GEORGE CROSFIELD.

LIVERPOOL, 10th Month, 1832.

LETTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have often recurred, with a degree of satisfaction to my early impressions, as well as to the instructions which were given me by my parents. They early made

me acquainted with the doctrines of Christianity, so far as the reading of the Scriptures of Truth would give me that knowledge, and I was carefully instructed to reverence these sacred writings. The precepts of the New Testament in a particular manner, did seem fully to correspond with those secret sensations, which I was early led to believe were the openings and leadings of Truth upon my mind ; I was enabled also, without an expositor, to receive and satisfactorily to understand, some of the more prominent and simple doctrines of the gospel, as to the character and the several offices of Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world.

And now also in due time, the history of the Society of Friends was introduced to my reading and observation ; and my youthful mind was thereby strengthened and confirmed, to make a more perfect discrimination between the works of the law and those of faith ; and to perceive what faith in God, and in the Lord Jesus Christ would do, even that faith which worketh by love to the purifying of the heart. I saw that it was sufficient ; that it enabled those sons of the morning of our day, notwithstanding the mighty opposition which lay in their way, to work the works of God ; even those spiritual works which were wrought in them, and by them through the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit in the covenant of God's promise unto them ; even in like manner as the primitive Christians did, they joined and worked with the workings of grace in themselves to the glory of God and to the praise of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And now I found myself to be one of this Society, not by birth and education only, but I embraced and received, and fully believed in the doctrines of Christianity as professed by it, and I have ever since loved the Society and its testimonies wherever they have been planted ;

not only in my native land of America, but also in this nation where this the Lord's right hand planting was, as regards our Society, first begun.

Seeing now that my lot has been cast amongst my friends here, in the love and service of the gospel, I have verily thought that the good of this people has come nearer to my best desires and feelings than ever it did before, and that for this reason; that this dedication has cost me more than any other service in which I have been engaged; and many, yea very many in this land have become as bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; if indeed I may be allowed to use and to spiritualize the expression; they have become as brothers and sisters in those tender feelings which I trust spring from the one blessed source of Divine love; so that though as an alien and a stranger here, as to the outward, still I feel to be one of you, and in my measure, to joy in your joys and grieve in your griefs—to travail in affliction with you, and in desire that you may faint not:—to endeavor to strengthen the hands which hang down with weakness, or rather to put up a prayer that our best Helper may lift them up, that he may confirm the feeble knees; and that all who have taken upon them the profession, may be encouraged to stand fast in the Lord, and faithfully in the testimonies of our God; so that this people, whom in his own good pleasure he chose to raise up and advance, distinct from all others of this day, to be as a beacon, a light, and a waymark outwardly in the world, may hold on their way, and continue faithful through his power to support and maintain the inestimable ground to which God did lead them, and gave them to stand upon; and that they may never suffer any by-way apprehension of good to draw their attention from the one great object of God's peculiar design in raising them up

to be a people, even to bear testimony to the spiritual nature and design of the gospel, as well as to uphold the glorious plan of redemption in all its other parts.

In whatever degree the present condition of the Christian world may now be improved by what has been done through this people, yet if by means of their unfaithfulness, a reaction should take place and continue, we may fear that when this people shall again have mingled with those from whom they came out, and the advanced ground of God's providence be thus vacated, that the religious testimonies given them to bear will also be lost with them. Should such an event occur, then indeed will it be better for mankind coming after, that this Society had never existed; for the enemy of all good, will not then fail to suggest that the ground having been once taken and found to be untenable, it would be vain and fruitless for any to attempt the like again; for we know, that the more efficient the means that may have been resorted to to attain an object, if those means fail, the more we despair of ever attaining that object. But O! that the spirit and power of the gospel may never give place to profession and form, however garnished and glowing that form or profession may appear.

And now my dear friend, my mind having been much exercised under divers weighty and important considerations of this nature since I have been in this land, I am induced to believe, it will contribute to my peace of mind, to open a little and spread forth before thee, a few remarks upon those subjects which have been more prominently and peculiarly exercising to my mind, during my labors amongst you; but I have no hope of being able to do justice to a review of so important a nature as may seem to be premised, but only in such a way as I can, endeavor to discharge what I apprehend to be my

duty; I propose, therefore, in my succeeding letters, to treat upon some points arising out of the foregoing considerations.

LETTER II.

ON THE FALL OF MAN, AND ON CHRISTIAN REDEMPTION.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

If it be, as has been affirmed, that enmity took root in some of the heavenly company, and that they through pride were led into rebellion, and an attempt to set up and establish a kingdom for themselves in opposition to, and above the throne and kingdom of God; still we have no reason to believe that the needful and mighty act of God in expelling from the regions of light their arch leader with all his band, had, or could have, any effect as a reconciliation, or any tendency to remove the enmity, however humbling their defeat and condition. No, nor that it were possible for those who had been created free partakers with their blessed and eternal King in the riches of his glory, after such daring rebellion and attempted usurpation, could ever be restored to that glorious state which they had lost by their fall;* for, as we may well believe, no mediation could be found between these rebels and Him whom they had attempted to dethrone; they had sinned wilfully and without temptation, and there remained therefore to them no more sacrifice for sins, but they were consigned to the blackness of darkness forever.†

* “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.” Heb. vi. 4, 5 and 6 —also Heb. x. 26.

† “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Matt. xxv. 41.

“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down

Hence, this arch-pretender, finding himself forever defeated by the power and interminable decree of God, was excited to the highest pitch of hatred and malice, and seeing he was now forever expelled from the glories above, would seek to obtain for himself some other place and kingdom where to rule. He, therefore, as it would appear, then sought out, and by his subtle temptation, assailed the lower creation of God, that he might hereby establish his dominion over a noble race which God had here placed, newly-created by his divine hand, in his own image, "a little lower than the angels," and furnished too with power from his almighty Creator, if he had been obedient, to resist and overcome this proud usurper of the prerogative of heaven; but he, the wicked one (for such he had now become) by deceit and lies, and by a proud contradiction of the law and commandments of God, attempted to turn away man from his allegiance to his beneficent Maker and Father, and to corrupt and obliterate the character and image of uprightness and holiness which God had impressed upon him; and instead thereof to stamp him with the mark and inscription of the beast, which is sin, and serves to show to whose kingdom he belongs.

In this the serpent succeeded but too well; and man,

to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment." 2 Peter ii. 4.

"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness." Jude 6.

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." Revelation xii. 7, 8, and 9.

through pride, and listening to the tempter, and seeking to obtain knowledge beyond what his Creator had assigned to him, fell into a mighty lapse of transgression, and was estranged from his Maker; the threatened penalty of his disobedience was inflicted upon him, and his condition was properly denominated death, than which, if it remain, there can be no greater punishment; and this death was truly realized, inasmuch as he died spiritually by losing the divine life through his transgression. He was dead also as it regards a sense of goodness; for his feelings were now so perverted, that they led him to consider God, who was truly his all beneficent Father, to be his enemy; he himself having now become the subject of another kingdom.

As things now were, it remained entirely with God, whether he would provide a way for man to return again to his rightful allegiance, so that the first purpose of his own benevolence and glory might still be realized; or whether he would abandon this ruined work altogether. But rejoice, O heaven! and sing, O earth! and break forth into singing, O ye mountains of the forest! love, boundless love, and mercy led the way, and if a plan could be found compatible with both the blessed attributes of justice and mercy, so that his statutes should not be rescinded nor dishonored, then God would open a way for them to return to himself again. And joyful to think and to know, in the richness of his grace a way *was* found, and a Mediator was also found and ordained who would for this, even for this fallen creature, give life for life. For however man had conceived pride, through the instilling of the author of it, and had a desire to be wise in himself, and to be as God, yet he had not rebelled as the fallen angels had done; hence a provision could be made and adapted to remove out of the way that which had be-

fallen him; and this provision should apply to him, on condition that he would then by obedience reverse his disobedience, for when the sacrifice for sin repented of, was in that day ordained, the Lord said then unto man, "*If thou doest well*, shalt thou not be accepted?"

But as it regarded the character and office of the Mediator, it was seen that he must also be a man: as it was man that sinned, so like must be given for like, and life for life, yea and death for death. That is, the death of a man temporally, (God's leniency being such,) should be accepted as an equivalent pledge for the death of a man spiritually, he being yet within the reach of such a pledge, not having sinned as those had sinned, who had fallen before him; and so, by a pledge, should man be redeemed from the judgment of death that rested upon him.

But as sin could not be atoned by sin, any more than disobedience could be atoned by disobedience, or by an impure offering; and as the subsequent race of man, if a race should be suffered, must descend through these sin-stained progenitors; therefore the offering of a mere man yet unredeemed, could not be equivalent to the effecting of redemption; and as no mere man, therefore, could be an equivalent pledge without first having a pledge; nor even then, so long as the nature and propensity to sin remained in him; so, therefore, no one could be found among men merely as such, that could possibly redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him.

There were also other, and still higher and greater reasons, why a mere man could not be a sufficient mediator, because in the covenant of such a redemption as this must be to succeed to salvation, there must be a

bringing to repentance, before the sins which had been committed could be forgiven or atoned for. And then again, and which is indispensable and cannot be commuted, man's heart must be enlightened, drawn and guided to the truth and to righteousness; for although he repent and his sins be remitted for once, yet without something to keep him from a recurrence to them, he will still sin, and never forsake the commission of it. For however he may know his former sins expiated by the atonement, still, if he witness not the interposition of a power to preserve him in future from sin, he will go on again, adding sin to sin, until the accumulation become such, and the duration of his transgressions so outlive the day of God's grace, that the application of the mediation, whether without or within, will be rendered entirely unavailing. And here we see the supreme excellency of the light and grace of this provision; that if observed, is able to keep us from a state, out of which the atonement itself is not designed to redeem us—even that of sinning against the Holy Ghost. (See Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6, and chap. x. 26.)

If the offering of a mere man could have been given and accepted for sins already passed, still this could have no effect in keeping man from sinning in future. But still the interposition and mediation must be effected, as wisdom teacheth us to believe, by the seed of the woman, even by the man Christ Jesus, who should know no sin, and in whom the fulness of God should dwell bodily, and this body and life of man in which he designed himself to dwell, should be a pure offering and sacrifice of the first fruits, even of the first and only man who never sinned. This was therefore a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour unto God, in which, and by which, he would blot out from his presence the trans-

gression of every penitent sinner, and obtain a place and ground for him, whereon he would deign to meet him ; and such too as would enable him to receive the divine grace, and prepare him for the guidance of the divine Spirit: for without this, man could not so much as be brought to repentance, and much less, to that which is the hardest of all attainments ; the forsaking and ceasing from sin ; for the mediation as well as the mediator was to be the Immanuel, God with us ; not only God in Christ Jesus, reconciling the world unto himself, but also God in them through a measure of his spirit, as was declared, “thou in me and I in them !”

And we have not only abundant Scripture testimony, to show the fitness and necessity of a mediator, to act in us, and with us, as well as without us, and for us: but our own inability alone to do anything that is good, clearly teacheth us the high order and urgent necessity of a spiritual and continual mediation to guide and preserve us. Herein is much of the excellency of the mediation seen, that after the expiation of repented sins, He the Mediator of the whole glorious covenant of life and salvation, is to us a mediator still, keeping with us, and constantly teaching us the denying of all ungodliness: for such is our weakness, even after remission, that but for his help continually, we should soon fall into our old sins again, and our last state would be worse than the first. So that in the end Christ may have died for us a thousand times, (if by his judgments we should be so many times brought to repentance,) and still we be continually growing worse and worse; yea, and though we might all the time be acknowledging the atonement, and having the most implicit confidence in it, still if we do not believe in him, and receive him, the promise of the Father, the Immanuel to be with us, to

keep us, all will be in vain. Yea, and if we do not by the power of the agency which God giveth us, work with him, and endeavor to keep his commandments, then the covenant to us is broken; yea, and *by us* is also broken; and moreover, if this indispensable part of the covenant so clearly identified and enforced by the undeniable authority of the Scriptures, is disregarded or rejected, however clear and full our faith may be in another indispensable part, still we are covenant breakers, and but partial believers in the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And again, on the other side: if any man with the Bible in his hand, shall deny the divinity of Christ, and the efficacy and necessity of his outward sacrifice, then all his professions of light or grace, or spirit, (if indeed he have the presumption to make such a profession,) will be but a mere ignis fatuus, or a counterfeit of the right thing, and will only contribute to his condemnation.

Now if by the suggestion of an evil spirit the fall of man was effected through *disobedience*, then are we not to conclude, that through the interposition of a good spirit the restoration is to be effected in the reverse of that by which man fell; even in obedience? And obedience is not a whit less necessary on account of what has gone before it in order to make way for it; for what Christ has done for us without us, has not rescinded a single obligation for us, — has not in the least exonerated us from obedience, or from fulfilling as much of the conditions as devolves upon us. In every covenant there is either a promise, an obligation, or a condition, between two at least; thus in that between God and us, after the first step which he himself has taken, to make way for all his promises, as well as even the application of the atonement, it is upon the condition of our obedience,

and the fulfillment of our part of that covenant, which ensures to us an eternal inheritance.

Christianity having been ordained as the blessed means of restoring man from his fallen condition and from sin, to a state of holiness and acceptance with God, is of all things the most hateful to the devil; yea, he hateth the faith and the power as well as the author of it. He strove mightily to destroy the child Jesus through the instrumentality of Herod, so that if possible he might frustrate and prevent his glorious mission amongst men; so likewise it is to be presumed that he unwittingly strove, through the chief priests and elders, to apprehend and bring him before Pilate and Herod that they might destroy him, not knowing at the time, that therein he was fighting against his own kingdom; for however cunning, yet he is not infinite in understanding, nor can he know beforehand the divine purposes. For although the coming of Christ, and his character as the Messiah, were so clearly spoken of, that doubtless, he as well as the children of men, were in expectation of it; yet the benefit of his death and sufferings, were described in so mysterious and hidden a manner, that even the most enlightened of men could not comprehend it until after his resurrection, when he himself clearly explained it to two of his disciples as they walked from Jerusalem to Emmaus, as well as at other times. Thus the enmity and malice of the devil led him ignorantly on to instigate the Jews to destroy the man Jesus, not knowing, as we may well believe, the satisfactory and saving purpose of the death of Christ.

The plan of our salvation and redemption then, on the part of Divine Providence, consists of three things:—1st. Repentance, or rather his power that leads to it. 2d, The atoning blood of Christ; and 3d, his Holy

Spirit which sanctifies; and this agrees with the apostle John's testimony that there are three that bear witness in the earth, viz: "the Spirit, the water and the blood, and these three agree in one." For we are instructed that the water of Jordan, administered upon the body of Jesus, and upon the bodies of men, represented repentance, and showed, and was thus acknowledged by Jesus himself, that judgment which brings to repentance cometh first; after this the blood of Christ shed at Calvary as an atonement and reconciliation for us, cometh in the second place; and the gift of the Holy Spirit for our guidance and sanctification comes in the third place; and this order of time, and their succession to each other, was arranged by Wisdom itself; for as the baptism of John, signifying repentance, took place first; so the offering of Christ, for the expiation of sins thus repented of, came next in succession; and lastly, the more full diffusion of the Holy Spirit followed for the accomplishment and completion of the work of sanctification; and as to the two former, their order is sufficiently proved by the times of those events; and as to the latter, its place is clearly demonstrated by the direction of truth and the nature of things;—see John vii. 39, "For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." But after his death and resurrection, he breathed on them, and bade them receive the Holy Ghost, which is the eternal spirit that sanctifies men's hearts. John xx. 22.

There are divers operations and effects of the Spirit distinctly spoken of in the Scriptures of Truth, as being effectual to salvation, and they are severally alluded to by Christ and his apostles, as well as by the holy men of old, in such manner as if each was saving of itself; and for the reason, as I apprehend, that not one of these

requisites, all of which are indispensable to our future well-being, should be overlooked or excluded from the summary of our faith in the covenant of life and peace. And these provisions and conditions may be thus enumerated:—

1st. That men are to be saved by the outward coming, sufferings, and death of Jesus Christ, through whom their souls are reconciled unto God.

2d. That men are to be saved by faith in God, and in his Son Jesus Christ.

3d. That men are to be saved by regeneration and baptism of the Spirit.

4th. That men are to be saved by Divine Grace.

5th. That men are to be saved by the Spirit of Christ or of God.

6th. That men are to be saved by the knowledge of God.

7th. That men are to be saved by obeying and keeping the commandments of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

To exemplify and demonstrate the foregoing positions, I would refer to the subjoined passages of Scripture as being distinctly applicable to them, and which, collectively, would seem to constitute and include the whole covenant of life and salvation.* And I would desire to

* “Even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, &c. John iii. 14. — We have redemption through his blood. Eph. i. 7. — Who gave himself for us, &c. Titus ii. 14. — And washed us from our sins in his own blood. Rev. i. 5.

“And whosoever liveth and believeth in me, &c. John vi. 26. — For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Gal. iii. 26.

“He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, &c. Matt. iii. 11, 12. — Except a man be born again, &c. John iii. 3. — Baptism doth also now save us, &c. 1 Pet. iii. 21.

“But by the grace of God, I am what I am, &c. 1 Cor. xv. 10. —

ask every one who is looking for the blessed hope of this high calling, even the glory of salvation, whether he can venture, even secretly in his own soul to disregard, or openly to disavow any one of the above conditions of his eternal salvation? And whether on serious reflection he would not be fearful of doing so at the great risk of his soul's happiness? Then how needful it is to have a full belief in the doctrines of Scripture, and in every part of them, not merely assenting to some and passing slightly over others, for fear that a practical and living belief in them should lead us to much pain and conflict of spirit, and to the mortifying of the will of the flesh.— Then let every one come down and prove himself, and

My grace is sufficient for thee, &c. 2 Cor. xii. 9. — For by grace are ye saved through faith. Eph. ii. 8. — For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. Tit. ii. 11.

“And his Spirit, it hath gathered them. Isa. xxxiv. 16. — It is the Spirit that quickeneth, &c. John vii. 63. — For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, &c. Rom. viii. 2. — But he that soweth to the Spirit, &c. Gal. vi. 8.

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, &c. John xvii. 3.

“If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted. Gen. iv. 7.

“Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. Jerem. vii. 23.

“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. Heb. v. 9.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. John viii. 51.

“Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. 2 Cor. x. 5.

“Fear God, and keep his commandments, &c. Eccles. xii. 13. — And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him because we keep his commandments, &c. 1 John iii. 22. — He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 1 John ii. 4. — He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. 1 John iii. 24. — And this is love, that we walk after his commandments, &c. 2 John 6.”

examine, by the light of Christ all the hidden and dark avenues of his heart, remembering that every secret thing must be opened and brought to judgment in the day of Jesus Christ. And oh, how desirable, that when that day shall come upon every one of us, we may submit to it, while there is yet tenderness in our hearts, so that a spirit of unbelief in any one of these great doctrines of life and salvation may never be entertained; that none of the great truths of the gospel may be looked upon with indifference, but that every one of us may be so quickened and made alive unto God, by the resurrection and power of Jesus Christ, as to be furnished and blessed with the perceptive and all instructive guidance and influence of his Holy Spirit.

LETTER III.

THE EFFECT OF ACTION AND REACTION UPON THE PROFESSORS OF CHRISTIANITY, ESPECIALLY IN RELATION TO THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

We learn from history, that whenever God in his providence has made way for an advance of his church and people, their old enemy and watchful foe, has then always been ready to exercise all his manœuvres and powers to drive her back again into the wilderness; and we have no need to go further back than the Protestant reformation for a proof of it; for in a review of those times, we easily recognize his palpable and bestirring efforts to frustrate the blessed work, and to tarnish the beauty that seemed to be dawning upon the church, and, if possible, to deter her from going forward in the way which God had opened before her, even to the advanced ground which he had provided for the pitching of her

tents and tabernacles. Thus, when the early reformers began to see the errors and inconsistencies of the Romish Church, the evil effects of their outward forms and observances could not but greatly strike their attention, and particularly their doctrine of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in what was called the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; the whole, and particularly the latter, tending to a denial of the spirituality of religion, and the benefit of the offering once made for all, by the sufferings of Jesus Christ without the gates of Jerusalem. The errors of Socinus were also propagated about this time, and his followers were thus in reality associated with the Romish Church in effecting the same object, though by different means, and seemed to threaten the overthrow and downfall of the whole doctrine of Christian redemption. The earnest efforts of the honest-hearted and sincere reformers urgently opposed both these evils, and the Romish Church, defending in a very undue manner the doctrine of works, the abuse of which was the foundation of their system of priestcraft, the enemy of all good, took advantage of the heat of this controversy, and through a want of watchfulness and care on the part of the first reformers, they were led on, step by step, to such a warm defence of the doctrine of the atonement, as to lose sight of the more practical operation of the light, grace, and spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ; and this gained such ground at a later period, during the hot disputes between the Calvinistic Puritans and the Protestant Episcopacy, which retain many of the Romish superstitions and errors, and they were so exclusively and intently fixed on extolling the merits of the former, that they very much lost sight of the necessity of the latter; and so by inattention to it, their experience in and faith concerning the power of practical

religion, gradually diminished and vanished away ; inso-much that finally they became so void and faithless of the spirit and life of religion, that he who made a profession of spirituality, became as it were, a by-word and a hissing to these great and zealous supporters of the ever blessed atonement. Yea, and those who worshipped God in spirit, who walked in his light, and believed in the perceptible guidance and influence of his holy spirit, were deemed mystics and enthusiasts; and now having lost the life and the power; the faith of these high professors generally was only literal, and their devotions an imitation, consisting of forms and ceremonies, and things that belonged to the outward law. Thus they in their turn, as the others in another way had done, made a breach in the same covenant or system of Christianity, and rejected very much of the vital and spiritual part, the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit.

This, we may well suppose, was effected by the action and reaction of that zeal of an unregenerate heart which tends to errors and extremes. But God, even her God, forsook not his church. He interposed to renew his whole covenant with her, notwithstanding her wavering and vibrations from the true centre, the power of the gospel! He would lead her again out of the wilderness where her enemy had driven her, and he would speak comfortably to her. He would raise up unto her faithful witnesses, whose hearts he would enlarge, that they should understand, and whose eyes he would anoint that they should see, and he would restore again to the church the whole covenant entire as in primitive times, and men should be able again to see equally every provision of his salvation.

And they, our predecessors, did see and did walk in the light of the Lord Jesus, in which every one who

walketh also believeth, and they do ever believe the whole covenant of God, and their faith will be found in all that faith can do, and their works in all that works can do. And they see that such faith as stands only in literal things, and is not also in the light, and life, and power, is dead, being but partial and alone; and in proportion as is the increase of faith, so is the increase of works; and so *vice versa*, as regards a living faith, and those works which are with it, which are the fruits of the Spirit of God. For such a faith, according to the declaration of the apostle, is also the fruit of the same spirit, so that he who hath not the Spirit of Christ, nor walketh by it, cannot have the faith as it is in Jesus.

But the coming forth of George Fox, and his cotemporaries, for the restoration of God's covenant, as well as the primitive testimonies and doctrines of the gospel, drew upon them the malice and rage of the old watchful foe; for the advancement of the church, by the redeeming power of God through Jesus Christ, still excited the most dire hatred of her enemy, the devil, whose malice, as it did in the early days of the Christian Church, now again instigated and poured forth a mighty volume of rage and persecution against them, hoping no doubt to get to himself some honor over the church of God. For inasmuch as in the primitive times he was able to persecute the Christian Church, only by and through the people of the world, so now he hoped to divide Christ's kingdom against itself, and if not to the overthrow of all — yet to the dividing of the spoil, and himself to share in it, by arraying Christian against Christian, catholic against protestant, and finally, even protestant Christians against each other. Now it was seen that even those who were making the highest profession of the atoning blood of their Redeemer, and who were placing

the most implicit reliance and confidence therein, could be brought forward in the very face of the gospel, to spoil and devour the professors of the same faith; for this plain reason only, that they, the latter, were endeavoring to embrace and observe all the commands and doctrines of their Lord and Master Jesus Christ. They had made a firm stand and notable advancement against the kingdom of darkness, therefore the prince of darkness now rose in his fury and spread the work of cruelty around, increasingly striving to waste and paralyze this people. But this advanced guard—this little band of humble warriors, fighting under the strong banner of Christ Jesus, their holy head and leader, were invincible, because their Captain was with them, and went before them; and for this reason, that their weapons were not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down the strongholds of Satan and his armies.

I shall now proceed to make some remarks upon Socinianism and infidelity, subsequent to the rise of the Society of Friends, and on the introduction of these opinions among them, and among other Christian professors. If inquiry were to be made for the first cause of these modern deviations from the soundness of Christian faith, we might easily trace it to the same source whence evil first came into the world, and whence we are to look for the primary origin of all iniquity; and if we were to seek for the grounds on which that first cause of evil acts on our fallen nature, our inquiries must end in the conviction, that it rests in a disposition for insubordination to the needful restraints of the divine law, and on pride, that great upholder of self, and of the will of the flesh. These are the elements, in the absence of the humbling power of Truth, with which the enemy pitches his strongholds and builds his embattle-

ments, even in the unrestrained will of man, and in the pride of his heart; a pride which may not be seen on his person, but which either his words or his actions, sooner or later, will show to have a dwelling in his heart. Hence, he will in a greater or less degree, stand opposed to the pure, humbling, and needful restraints of the gospel; in some way or other this will be found, and to such a degree at least, as will keep him under the dominion of evil. But the out goings by which the tempter leads man off from the ways of Truth, are varied according to his natural disposition; according too, to the traditions received, and the condition and faith of the society with which he is connected, and of those deviations which lead from the Truth; the enemy, although he regards the least, still glories most in the worst and widest; and although high professing hypocrisy cannot be deemed the least of these, yet open infidelity must be acknowledged the greatest; still it is believed, that the ready foe has made the former a clue to the latter, and however natural it is for things to produce their like, yet we find that through the interposition of an evil agent, the natural order may be broken and reversed, and a thing may lead to another widely differing in its degree, and in some respects in its nature, yet in denomination the same. As one extreme often produces another, so may the abhorrence of one evil lead the unwary mind into its opposite evil; and although, in some dispositions, over action may subside into inaction, yet it undoubtedly often produces reaction; and as it regards spiritual agency, where the power of Truth is not the moving principle, then there is another power which influences and controls men's actions, and controls that which leads to action, viz: their faith, or rather their notions or way of thinking; for indeed if they are not in some degree

under the influence of the Truth, let their profession be what it may, they can have nothing which deserves the name of faith. For when men forsake the power of Truth, this choice gift is continued to them no longer; they then have not its renewing assurances, they are trusting in a false hope, which is nothing more than the spurious workings of the deceiver. The vanity and pride of ascribing to man the honor of saving himself by his own good works, as is done by those who rely for salvation on works alone, has been eagerly grasped by the devil; and at the same time that he extols it to its devotees, he exhibits it in the most ridiculous point of view to all such, as seeing its inconsistencies, are led into the Calvinistic sentiment, which excludes good works altogether, causing them to confide exclusively in Christ's outward atonement for them, and in this way the enemy takes advantage of man's frailty; still charity leads us to the persuasion that sincerity may exist in the one as well as in the other, but practical observation obliges us also to admit, that a complete character of hypocrisy may be found in both.

Again, where good works or obedience are struck altogether from the account, and God believed to be equal in all his ways; and implicit confidence being placed on Christ's redemption without us, then comes in the doctrine of universal salvation without any condition. In all these forms of belief we can plainly see the care taken to provide an escape from the pain and conflict of the sanctifying and practical work of the grace and spirit of God upon men's souls for their purification, so that a place may be found and abode in, for the continued indulgence of the flesh; and the will of man, vainly attempted to be kept alive in every form of religion, save the one true form in which obedience and the power of

the Spirit dwelleth. It must be acknowledged then, that the mind let out to mere opinions, without the living, fundamental and true touchstone of the light and grace of God, confirmed by the Scriptures, will probably run into great errors ; and so it seems many, very many, have run. But the devil has not led every one in the same way, though he may bring them to the same bitter end at last,—for there are many paths which lead through devious windings, but all come out at the same sad point. He may induce both professors and non-professors, (the freedom of the gospel is not apparent in one, nor its fruits in the other,) to disbelieve the spirituality of Christianity, because they see their neighbor, who is high in the profession of it, either a mere enthusiast or a hypocrite. Again, he may induce some men to disbelieve in the atonement of Jesus Christ, because many who lay great stress upon it, are in their practice no better than infidels. Furthermore, he may induce many to condemn Christianity under every name and form, because they see those who profess to believe in, and follow the Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour, continue to pursue this world, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, with great avidity, like other men.

But after all, whatever the inducement may appear to be, or whatever may be seen in others inclining thereto, the strongest ground of unbelief is in a man's own heart, and in the utter want, or loss of true religion there. To such as are inclined to reasoning, Satan is fully able, successfully to pervert and misrepresent the doctrines of the gospel, because when their minds are darkened and know not the Truth, he can and does lead them to mistake his false radiance for the light of Christ, and thereby induces a great reversion of views and sentiments, making light darkness, and darkness light, before them.

Hence they become an easy prey to infidelity. In this way I apprehend it was that some were seduced in the early days of our Society, even such as had more self love and spiritual pride, than vital Christianity, to wit: John Perrott, John Wilkinson, and others. (See Sewell's and Gough's Histories.)

But we see how soon their anti-christian doctrines were discerned and detected by George Fox and his contemporaries, because the light and spirit of Christianity abode in them; even a measure of that Spirit which trieth every spirit and is able to decide whether it be of God or not. The judgment of Truth was thus placed upon the heads of these innovators and great pretenders to spirituality. And again, in more modern times, it was in the self-same way, that Satan deceived and led away some in Ireland and many in North America; and it is believed that the facility of his victory over them, was greatly owing to their self love, self righteousness, and their great want of meek Christian principle. Inso-much that by his transforming power, he succeeded in bringing them to suppose or to profess that they supposed, that our first Friends did not believe in the true divinity and reconciling sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ; than which a greater absurdity, and perversion of things, could hardly be imagined. For however the views of others as to the spirituality of religion were such as necessarily to lead our early Friends to dwell much upon that part of the Christian doctrine, and to insist on the leading of God's grace in the heart; yet there is nothing more obviously foreign to the truth than the pretensions of those Socinian seceders, viz: that our first Friends did not believe in the true godhead and manhood of Jesus Christ, and in the blessed purpose of his sacrifice. So that we verily know that these outbreakings, cannot in

the least degree be grounded upon any defect in our predecessors, in any point of Christian faith concerning the offices and character of Christ; for abundant evidence is deducible from their writings to prove that such a defect did not exist.

As has been before suggested, the professors of Christianity in the time of George Fox, had generally forsaken the spirituality of religion, but were not in the least wanting as to a belief in the outward coming, the divinity and sacrifice of Christ. Hence there was not that necessity of insisting upon faith in this last-mentioned part of the Covenant, respecting which there was no defect of faith, as upon that part in which there was a deficiency; and this their practice was according to Truth and sound reasoning. For what skilful physician, being called to administer to a diseased person, would not resort to such medicine, as would tend to counteract the complaint that was already upon him, rather than to administer to a disease under which he did not suffer, and in which respect he was entirely sound and healthy. Now, as the literal and spiritual parts of Christianity cannot be considered by any truly enlightened mind to be opposing or contending properties, any more than the body and soul of a perfect man, so therefore there can be no necessary fear, that to promote the right apprehension of the one could endanger the safety of the other. To say that except a man has the spirit of Christ he is none of his, does not gainsay the testimony that "God was manifest in the flesh, seen of angels, believed on in the world, received up into glory!" and I believe that the more true spiritual Christianity a man has, the better he will be qualified rightly to see and to estimate the doctrines of Truth as contained in the Holy Scriptures relative to the outward coming and offices of Jesus Christ; and for

this very reason I believe, and am abundantly convinced, that our predecessors had much more of the true faith, and had much clearer views of the meaning and standing of the Scriptures, as well as of the true divinity of, and the purposes of the sufferings of our Lord and Saviour, than other professors of that day, who were making a high profession of their faith in them, but many of whom were wanting in spiritual and vital religion.

LETTER IV.

ON THE SECESSION IN AMERICA.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It has been supposed by some, that within the last century, there had been either a defect in the faith of the Society of Friends as to the outward coming and atonement of Jesus Christ; or otherwise not enough of care taken by its ministers to lay sufficient stress upon, or to allude sufficiently to the efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ without us, so as by that means to keep up a safe barrier against the inroads of infidelity. I think the latter was the case with too many in America, and I make no doubt that if Friends had been timely aware of what might come, and what did afterwards come, they would have been better guarded against it. But I know not that there was any unsoundness in our Society there, until the seeds were sown in the mind of him who stood at the head of the late secession, excepting only in a very few solitary individuals. Nor do I think that the open infidel writings of Paine, nearly half a century ago, had any effect in shaking the faith of Friends; for, as far as my knowledge extends, these writings were justly deprecated by them, and treated everywhere with the abhorrence they justly merited; but whether the publi-

cations of Paine, or the more artful and refined writings of Priestley, contained the seed, which first fell on the fitly prepared ground: to wit, the heart of the first founder of the American secession, I am not prepared to determine; but through whatever medium, or whether only through the agency of Satan, it seems that either by a lapse into spiritual pride, or by some other means, his heart was exceeding congenial to its growth, and his natural talent and manner were wonderfully calculated to supplant truth unobserved; as well as for the first spreading the seeds of infidelity. It seems however that there were a few prominent characters about the same time, or soon after, who were prepared to receive from this their leader those seeds of infidelity. Hence through him and them (men of great influence) awful devastation was made in the Society of Friends in America; and however the Socinian doctrine may have lamentably spread far and wide both in Europe and America, still I apprehend that so great a schism or devastation in proportion to numbers, has not been known elsewhere, as in the instance just mentioned. Here then a question may arise, whether the Society of Friends, from its peculiar tenets, or discipline, is more exposed to the influence of such doctrines, than other branches of the Christian church. To this it may be replied with much confidence, that the plain, full, and true doctrines of Friends are not more nearly allied to Socinianism than are those of others. No! and if indeed the doctrines of this Society are the genuine doctrines of primitive Christianity, which we do most surely believe, then are they farther from infidelity than any others.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt at all that the devil envies those most who are the most purely Christian, and consequently presses them the most sorely with his

temptations, and strives the hardest to ensnare and drive them back from their advanced ground; and upon this principle we are led to believe that the temptations wherewith he tempted the author of Christianity, were greater than those whereby he has ever tempted men. By the same rule he exerts his power more against good men than against others, and besides, the more good he can despoil and overcome, the greater his victory and exultation. But however great the trials of those who stand high in the scale of profession may be, still, if it be a profession to which God hath called them, their dwelling being "in the secret place of the Most High," they "shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty," — and their strength and their protection will certainly be equal to the trials of their day; hence as their feet abide upon the watch tower, their habitation will be kept in safety. But a mere profession of Christianity is altogether unavailing in a Quaker as in any other. Yet as it regards the extent of that dereliction of principle which befell so many professing with Friends in America, however they may still profess to be Christians, yet every one acquainted with their skepticism, cannot but fear that they or their leaders have so far abandoned Christianity as to forfeit their right of benefit in the outward coming and propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and consequently their right in the whole covenant; as all depends upon that blessed sacrifice. But it would seem as if the devil did make a kind of compromise with them, and such too as he had made with none other than professed Quakers, for as their principles lead them to believe in the light, grace and spirit of Christianity, as a distinguishing article, it would seem that he despaired of so managing with them, as to strike this off at once with the other important part of the great plan, he therefore

suffered them still to profess the spiritual guidance, (which nevertheless if real, there is nothing that he hates worse,) well knowing that if he could induce a flat denial of the proper divinity and atonement of Jesus Christ without them, that they would not then, in the very nature of things, be sharers in the true light of Christ within them, and walk in it: so that he could now deceive them with his false radiance, which they should mistake for the real light. For having denied "the Lord that bought them," they could not be enlightened by him.

Now, according to their manner of thinking and reading too, as they would of course be looking for light and spirit to guide them, full opportunity presented for this false light of the fallen angels, and the true light being thus superseded by darkness, through unbelief and hardness of heart, there was no power in them to distinguish between the true and the false; between Christ and anti-christ; hence antichrist took the lead, and his light and his spirit became their guide! he, well pleased enough with it, and with their cry, which was a continual reiteration of "the light! the light! the spirit! the spirit!"—and Christ within but *not without!* yea, and proud and vaunting enough is he to have wrested from Christ his name! and to obtain from the children of men the honor and homage attached to their leader! glorying too in his own power of transformation and delusion, in making himself as God and sitting as God!—Now in this we see his cloven foot again, and his two-fold and cunning intention in pushing forward these infidel and deluded professors to the cry of "the spirit of the Lord! the spirit of the Lord!" and filling their mouths continually with it, and for this very purpose; that the truly spiritual Christian, whom he cannot in the same way decoy, may, if possible, be made to loathe the

very name of Christ in spirit, or “Christ within the hope of glory,” this manifestation of the covenant being so continually brought forward and taken in vain by those well known to be antichristians. Hence we see the art and power of the arch-destroyer to contrive and form a deadly weapon with two edges, calculated to cut, to wound, and to kill each way! he fills the mouths of his deluded followers, both with a cry against Christian redemption, and at the same time for it; that is, partly for and partly against, in order to divide Christ; thus also to divide and part asunder his people, and to destroy the one-half on his right hand, and the other half on his left!

Then seeing the destroyer has gone forth, let all stand fast: for he has now but dressed up his old trick in a new garb, in order to play it off again upon the unwary, and those who cry peace. He has instigated the Socinian doctrine on the one hand to take captive all that is possible thereby, intending that those who may escape it, shall in their flight for refuge take shelter in the doctrines and opinions of men, in unconditional assurance, or in the flesh without the spirit,—because therefore the Socinian or Hicksite has sinfully denied the divinity and atonement of Christ, shall we unnecessarily and sinfully too, abandon everything else relative to God’s salvation, that so we may establish what they deny? as if it were possible for us to obtain salvation by the one without the other. And will any be driven, through cowardice, from a practical faith in divine grace, and the light and spirit of the gospel, because these seceders have illusively pretended thereto? Will any man be deterred from reverently naming and believing in the holy name, because the atheist casts it off with scorn? Not the true Christian, no; for if the very worst of men

deceptively profess the best of things, that will never occasion the true believer to abandon them, nor if the unfaithful abandon one part of the covenant, professing to support the other, it will never induce the former to reverse it, for in so doing he would be a covenant-breaker as much as the other.

Now, in conclusion, I would ask if it is not alike dangerous to man and dishonourable towards God, to deny that Jesus Christ has done anything for our salvation without us, and to deny that he is doing anything for us, within us, for the same purpose; seeing that if we reject either of these provisions, we cannot be saved, for we cannot so much as begin a good life, without the application of that great sacrifice of his body, once made for all men. Nor in the second place can we advance a single day of our lives in the Christian way and warfare against sin, without his presence and help continually extended to us. The former was a mighty offering of his own body, a living sacrifice, once made for the reconciliation of man; the latter is a continual extension and operation of his power and spirit, light and grace, perceptibly working in the hearts of men, for their preservation and safe guidance through the whole course of their lives; for however much and long a man may have gone forward by co-operating with the spirit of God in himself, yet he can never witness preservation and a continuance in well-doing but through the power of this grace and spirit of God working in him and with him; and if the declarations of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the apostle Paul, be correct, man might for want of a continuance herein, sin against the Holy Ghost, and fall from a good state into one from which it would be impossible even for the atonement itself to restore him.

LETTER V.

ON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It will be seen by every rational, well-informed mind, that the comparison of two or more things together does not virtually diminish the real value of either; but affords a ready way of exhibiting, and ascertaining, the equal, or superior, or inferior properties of things differing both in nature and kind, viz. the good and the evil; and these severally have their degrees; but my present purpose will be answered by a brief recurrence to the good. On this great scale is beheld, even by us, short-sighted as we are, a mighty range of vast extent from the lowest to the highest, in the blessed order of God's assignment; for no man hath ever been able to comprehend, or to reach to the higher degrees of the radii of this mighty circle; so that we see there is room for a place and a station for every good thing in the spiritual as well as in the temporal economy, and that, without any interference or infringement upon each other. And God standeth above all and over all, and through all, and is in all, and ordereth all; and in comparison of whom there is no created thing which can be named in the heaven above, or the earth beneath, or under the earth, or even all things put together; they can indeed be no more accounted of, than the drop of the bucket, or than the particles of dust which cleave to the balance; and this is the more evinced to us by reflection on his glorious attributes of wisdom and power, justice and mercy, goodness and love, each in itself unbounded in extent; yet in him all are comprehended, each of itself filling all things, yet each clearly distinct; all in harmony, and

what is wonderful, all are one, and that one is God, and each of these bears witness to the whole, and God in each records his mighty power, and testifies, and manifests himself in all. He, Jehovah, is seen of angels, but he has also manifested himself unto man; and, which all believers acknowledge, he has not only manifested himself, but also the knowledge of his will, and that too at sundry times and in divers manners.

But as it regards the ways and means by which God, through Jesus Christ, has revealed his will in former times, or at least as respects the adaptation of those ways and means to the minds of men in the present day, there appears to be a great difference of opinion between us as a people and other professing Christians—which difference Robert Barclay in his apology for the true Christian divinity, has set forth in a clear, cogent, and scriptural manner. He has in that work answered the great question, whether that principle which contains the light, grace, spirit, and faith of the gospel, or the Bible, is the first and best leader and controller of the Christian's life and practice; and he has fairly made the Bible to decide this question itself. None need do more than simply quote all the passages from the Scriptures which speak in favor of both these positions, and there will certainly be found a great preponderance in favor of the ground taken by our early Friends, and taken also by the apostles, in following the directions of our Lord, as to the guidance of his spirit, and its operation upon men's hearts. And I would indeed that all who may have any doubts on this point—might first read the New Testament carefully through with candor, and an eye to the subject, and then examine Robert Barclay's proposition on the same subject, when the coincidence will be readily seen. But though Robert Barclay has clearly

and unanswerably demonstrated this, I would suggest the following queries for the consideration of all inquirers:—

1st. Can the Scriptures, or did they ever, save any one without the spirit?

2d. Is a person called to the work of the ministry by the Scriptures, or by the spirit of Jesus Christ?

3d. Is a man brought under a concern to go from one place to another to preach the gospel, by the Scriptures, or by the constraining power of the spirit and love of Jesus Christ?

4th. And when he is arrived at the place assigned, and is assembled with the people, is it not the spirit of Christ that truly unfolds the Scriptures, and brings to view the state of men, either in the words of Scripture, or in some other suitable language?

5th. And when a professed minister preaches in any of our meetings, his doctrines not being repugnant to the letter of the Scriptures, are the elders or others to judge by the Scriptures, or by the Spirit of Truth, whether his ministry is from the right spring or not?

6th. Did not the Jews think they had eternal life in the Scriptures, and yet would not come unto Christ that they might have life?

Finally, Christ the Lord, is the minister and leader of his people, (others as well as ministers,) for they do believe the truth of his gracious words, that he *is with them*, and dwelleth in them, and girdeth them, and bringeth all things to their remembrance; and they know him and his words which he spake in the days of his flesh, to be unequivocal and true, and not feigned words, or vain pretensions. They know too, by blessed experience, that their faith in him, their leader, is a practical and living principle — that it is not a mere theory; and

they find this living experience confirmed to them by literal testimonies from the Scriptures. Hence they are enabled livingly to believe the Scriptures, and to assign them their proper place; or rather to allow them to take their own station and allotment in the blessed schedule of God's providence, declaring themselves to be "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," and that *through faith* they are able to make us wise unto salvation; where too he has also placed them, and where they acknowledge themselves to have been placed. Hereby those who attempt to put them in the place of the immediate and life-giving instruction of the spirit of Christ, are not true and genuine believers of the full, fair, and irrefragable testimony of the Holy Scriptures, as it relates to the question before us. In making a comparison of the blessed spirit of the gospel with the Scriptures of truth, there is nothing lost to them; for placing it above them is no diminution of their excellency, nor of their character; nor can there be any dishonor brought to the sacred writings, by placing the all-manifesting spirit, and light, and grace of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, over and above them in the rightful order of God's manifestations and provisions for the children of men. Nay! truly, it cannot be derogatory to the Scriptures, nor to any other creature here below, to place the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, the quickening spirit above them; and it may be presumed that no person who believes in and is disposed willingly and self-denyingly to wait from time to time, for the coming of the Lord from heaven, the quickening spirit, will be disposed to give the preference to aught which is beneath the power, and the life, the covering, and the instruction, proceeding from it; for these know it to be their Alpha and Omega, truly the begin-

ning and the end of all their Christian movements ; but this would never authorize any one in the least to believe or act contrary to the Scriptures, which are a blessed revelation of the will of God.

If we compare the Scriptures with the writings of our early Friends, there will be nothing lost to the latter by placing the former above them, and in the higher sphere of that exalted rank, where they do deservedly, and ever ought to stand, far above all modern writings, for several considerations which are well defined by Robert Barclay. For as the Scriptures, being authentic and true, place themselves below Christ and his blessed Spirit, so the writings of our worthy predecessors being also true, place themselves meekly and modestly, entirely below the holy Scriptures — a correct position.

Now, therefore, as the Scriptures are true and authentic in word and doctrine, and stand above all other writings, we may fully admit them to be the only outward, fit rule and standard by which all the professors of Christianity may prove and try their doctrines ; and more especially, where *that Spirit* which trieth the spirits, is not so well known and understood. This outward test being then generally agreed to by all, is a treasure of inestimable value, and the more so because it instructs them of the purchase of their redemption, and emphatically directs all to the light and grace of God, through the gospel ; which are the very things that our forefathers and we as a people have insisted on. But we see, nevertheless, that for want of a perfectly single eye to the light of Christ, some of the doctrines of this perfect standard are misconstrued and differently understood, so that Christendom has become divided into divers denominations, and each of these denominations has a creed or confession of faith peculiar to itself, and

founded, as it is supposed, upon a right understanding of the Scriptures; every individual member, therefore, of these different sects feels himself bound to believe and support the doctrines of the gospel as understood by his own society; and such is surely his duty, if he believes with all his heart that they are correct. But whenever any member of a religious body sincerely thinks that he has found important errors in the fundamental doctrines of his own people, it then becomes his duty openly and candidly to say to them, "That such and such being your faith and such and such mine, I must therefore separate myself from you, my views having become established, and my duty prompting me to open them to you, and before all men, and not knowing but as ye are many and I am but one, that ye are still more correct than I, I am resolved, therefore, to take no secret measures, nor to use any hidden influence, to draw you unawares into my opinion; knowing as I do that the purity and integrity of the gospel is such, that no end, however seemingly good, can sanctify any deceptive means to draw votaries to its support."

Candid and Christian was the way taken by our early Friends to gather and establish a society coinciding with their own views; they maintained honest, manly ground; for their object was not a perversion of right principles, but a fair and lucid exhibition of them in the very face of day. Far different were the subtle movements of the seceders from Friends in America; they endeavored, with all the art and cunning in their power, secretly to gain and to proselyte the unwary, to their new-fangled system of infidelity. How much more honorable to have come out into broad daylight, and proclaimed their views, inviting others to their standard. There might have been honor in such measures, though practiced by infidels.

The subject before us, my dear friend, is one of deep importance, (even the right assignment of the place of the holy Scriptures,) when we contemplate the great consequences which await the retaining or abandonment of apostolic ground; the ground taken by our predecessors in profession, and which they supported with regard to the comparative rank of the spirit of Jesus Christ, and the Scriptures; for it would not require much foresight and sagacity to see, that if we as a people, were to change the place of the Scriptures, and exalt them above, and put them in the place of the teaching of the spirit of Christ, that it must inevitably, and that before long, completely overturn and change our ancient faith and practice, concerning both silent worship, and the need there is of a continually renewed qualification in a gospel minister; two very prominent and important doctrines of the Christian religion. They are indeed the true doctrines of the gospel of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ; and they had been virtually witnessed by the real worshippers and faithful messengers in all the previous ages of the world, who waited, spoke, and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The knowledge and true experience of these doctrines had been very much lost, even since the more refulgent dawning of gospel light upon the sons of men, until they were proclaimed, and the true standard was again raised and supported through much pain and suffering by George Fox and his contemporaries; and the same doctrines continue to be acknowledged by their successors in faith down to the present day. Yet it is lamentable that these doctrines remain to be peculiar to the society of Friends, and that they only (it is believed) as a body, are found experimentally and livingly to teach and to practice them.

Inasmuch then as men, by silently waiting upon God,

may happily attain strength and instruction, so they can thereby do more towards pulling down the strongholds of sin and Satan ; therefore his enmity is the more excited, and his cunning the more exercised to allure them from this blessed ground ; for finding his attempts to drive them by violence from the truth, to be in vain, he now very insidiously resorts to art and intrigue ; he is very plausible with them, seeking if he can to relax their direct hold upon God, and their dependence singly on him. He asks but small concessions at once, and admits something that shall very nearly resemble the right thing, and yet not be the thing itself ; he gives it a good name, alleging its necessity, and extolling its advantages. And however the adversary hates the Holy Scriptures, and would induce men to disbelieve them altogether, still, when he cannot affect this purpose, it is like himself, to exalt them in name, even above their right order and true standing, that so he may dishonor Christ ; hence he would place the Scriptures instead of, or before the instructions of Christ's spirit, casting a shade of darkness over men's minds, and over the true faith of the gospel subtly suggesting the impracticability of a direct leading of the Holy Spirit, and thus inducing ministers to abandon that flesh-paining exercise of waiting for the promise of the Father, and setting them to work to preach the letter only instead of Christ Jesus in the demonstration of the spirit, and with power ; hence by degrees he would in time, so thoroughly change and remove this holy ground of our standing, that it might finally be abandoned altogether ; which must indeed unavoidably be the case if we misplace the Scriptures (as some other professors do,) by putting them as our instructor before the Spirit ; then would *our* worship, *our* ministry, and *our* forms, become like theirs !

LETTER VI.

ON PLAINNESS AND SELF-DENIAL.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

My mind has often been brought into much painful exercise on account of the many departures from the wholesome Christians testimonies of simplicity and plainness; testimonies faithfully upheld by the Society of Friends in its earlier days, and times of its greater purity; leading to humility and meekness, and to the avoiding of pride and high-mindedness. There is no difficulty in ascertaining from whence these testimonies were drawn by our early Friends, even from Jesus Christ himself, that great example of meekness and self-denial; and the source too from whence every wholesome admonition, and good and perfect gift are received; and if through all good conscience we will "observe whatsoever he commandeth us, even to follow him;" and what the apostles preached and observed also, we shall find it needful to make a stand against the insidious pursuits of vanity, and a worldly spirit, and a nurturing of the will of the flesh. The apostle declared that "the grace of God which bringeth salvation," teacheth (also) the "denying of ungodliness and the world's lusts," and this truth, with the declarations of Christ himself, to wit, "if any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself and take up his daily cross and follow me," and "take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and low of heart," and that of coming to be a disciple of Christ and wearing his yoke brings us to the denying of what another apostle calls "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life;" and it is by this practical self-denial that the followers of Christ are distinguished from

other people; it is not what men say, or profess, that makes the true, distinctive character, for a man may think much and believe much, and rely much upon the sufferings of Christ upon the cross, and at the same time be an utter enemy to the cross of Christ, as it regards his own practical endurance of it, a thing indispensable to a disciple of Christ; and it is very evident, that there can be no true follower, without possessing so much of the spirit and power of the cross, as will work in him to the mortifying of the deeds of the body; to the sanctifying of the spirit, and to the subjugation of the will of the flesh.

And a good degree of this experience is undoubtedly witnessed by individuals under different denominations; but the Society of Friends from the first, found it needful to adhere to greater purity of manners than other professors had done, in order to be more perfect followers of his example, as well as of his doctrine of the straight and narrow way which leads to life; believing indeed the verity and truth of his sayings; and that his doctrines of the cross are unequivocal; and finding by practice too, that the bearing of his cross patiently and honestly, did in very deed, work to the mortifying of the deeds of the flesh; hence as a people we have seen more clearly than others the necessity of "always bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." "For we which live, are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11.

Whatever then may be the practices or sayings of others, we feel bound faithfully to adhere to the commands and doctrines of Christ and his apostles as recorded in holy writ, as well as to the word of God's

grace in our hearts, to the denying of all desires after the maxims and manners, fashions and customs, of this vain world. And as this was a subject not unworthy of the Son of God, and his apostles, in his and their preaching and personal simplicity, none will do well in charging his more scrupulous followers with narrow-mindedness, because of their conformity to the doctrine and practice of Christ and his apostles ; seeing that every one of his disciples should conscientiously keep his commandments, and follow his example of meekness and humility. Nor let any one be deterred from the practice of a self-denying life because he may sometimes see traditional or hypocritical professors trusting in a form of godliness without the power ; for there is not one of the Christian virtues, but attempts have been made to counterfeit it ; and they also who make such attempts are enemies to the cross of Christ and him crucified, which is the power of God, and wisdom of God, and which also the apostle told one of the churches, he was resolved only to know amongst them.

There was I think more than one reason why the peculiar and primitive testimonies of plainness were given to and upheld by the Society of Friends ; and first, because they are congenial to the very nature of Christianity in its purest form, and agree better with its other testimonies. And secondly, because if conscientiously maintained, they would serve to exhibit this constant acknowledgment to the world, “ I am the Lord’s ! ” And thirdly, because it would be an enclosure round about the tender plants of a rising generation ; for by observing these peculiarities in language, manners, and appearance, there would not be that inclination to mix familiarly with others ; and this has proved to our beloved youth a great preservation from the corruptions and vanities of the world. In

this point of view, the benefit to our Society has been incalculable; for though it is not these peculiarities of plainness that cause us to be fruitful, yet by them as an enclosure, the fruit may be kept from being devoured. It is the good soil of the garden, well cultivated, that bringeth forth the fruit, but it is the fenced wall of God's providence round about, that keepeth it from being devoured by the creatures without.

And so far is this testimony from being a burden or a hardship, it is through the gift of Him who helpeth, a choice blessing from his hand, and a blessing too, which if we as a people should begin to despise and lightly esteem, God will in his displeasure perhaps remove from us. Yea, and if the vine which he has planted, when he looked for grapes, should be found bringing forth only wild grapes, he will certainly remove this safe enclosure, and suffer the wild beast to tread it down; and he will also command the clouds that they should rain no rain upon it.

And as a small leak, if suffered to continue, will sink a ship, however good and richly laden, and as a small breach in the enclosure of the vineyard, however fruitful, will let in the devourer, so I believe if this testimony, (however small any may deem it,) should be abandoned, it would greatly endanger our safety. Yea, and if the boundaries of demarkation between this people and others, as exhibited in our peculiar testimonies, were removed, or suffered to go down through the fear of controversy or of singularity; then should we be prepared to go back, and mingle again with others, and that definite and honorable characteristic by which we have been known and distinguished from all others, would be seen and known no more. Hence I consider it highly important to be ourselves faithful, and to train up, and in-

struct our families in these Christian testimonies, and other doctrines of Christ, by a constant exhibition of this good and comely order and example, as well as by clear, plain argument, and open and full declaration of the hope within us.

And if the true ground of the gospel of our Lord and Saviour in its primitive purity, as seen by us, cannot be supported *without* controversy, then let it be done in the meekness and wisdom of Jesus *by* controversy; for the cause of the blessed Truth is worthy both of controversy, and of a warfare too, under the banners of the Prince of Peace. And to strengthen the minds of any, who might be wavering, we may well refer them to the steady and unabating exercises and advice of the Yearly Meeting in London, for upwards of one hundred and fifty years past; a body which has extended its concern and care over the whole Society, for its preservation in the meekness, simplicity, and purity of the gospel, and which, in point of religious knowledge, Christian authority, and weight of character, has never been exceeded in the Christian world, since its establishment.

And now my dear friend, in the conclusion of these letters, I may well say, that they have been written in the feeling of that love which knoweth no bounds; and which hath for its object the true happiness and salvation of all; desiring that, as I have written them in simplicity and tenderness of spirit, thou wouldst permit them to receive a portion of thy consideration. I feel a fervent solicitude that all may stand fast in the Lord, and hold the profession of their faith without wavering, cleaving to the blessed Truth, and submitting to its humbling power; and thankfully receiving every provision of God's providence, which is dispensed to us in common with others, and holding fast to those which have

been in a more peculiar manner mercifully committed to us, as the testimonies and statutes of the Lord were to a people formerly. Then might we not all well say, "*Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar,*" even in the land of Midian, for the crown of his pride must be reduced in Jacob; yea, and it must be brought down in Israel: and again; though Esau be thy brother, and the Lord hath planted him upon his high mountain, and given him a place in the earth, yet Israel must not dwell with him, nor abide there, for he must dwell alone. And behold Moab also, his kinsman, for neither shall he join himself unto Moab, however multiplied his burnt-offerings, and exalted his sacrifices upon his high places; for Israel must abide in his tent, yea, even in his lowly tabernacle a little longer, until the indignation be overpast; for the Lord is his tent and his tabernacle, and it was he that first led him forth and allotted to him his possessions in the valleys, and as the trees of lign aloes hath he planted him in his garden enclosed, and made him fruitful as by the river side; and if he will be content to dwell in the land where the Lord his God has planted him, and keep his statutes, then the Lord will bless him still, in the midst of the nations, and he will cause that no enchantment nor divination shall prevail against him, and so shall he abide as a tabernacle that shall not be taken down. And though many may forsake him and despise him, because he is small, and his dwelling is in a low place, and because the glory of this world shineth not upon the ark of his testimonies, yet let him not be dismayed, the Lord is his light and God his glory; and he will encamp round about him; and his righteousness shall "go forth as brightness" and his "salvation as a lamp that burneth!"

EXTRACT

FROM THE INTRODUCTION TO THE "NARRATIVE
AND EXPOSITION."

It is apprehended that a loss, in a greater or less degree, of the Virtue, Life, and Power, of pure Christianity, has prepared the minds of too many in the Society of Friends, to imbibe sentiments which are at variance with true self-denial, and a full conformity to the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently, with his doctrines as held and laid down by the early writers in our Society. That a great tendency outward, and to outward views and outward things, has, of late, been apparent in this once greatly favored Society, is very obvious.

Consequently the sentiments of some writers, who have not known the living savour of the Divine life to predominate in their own hearts, (or otherwise have lost its unction,) have sorrowfully spread and taken root in many minds.

And the authors of such sentiments appear to have obtained great place with many of our members, and to have much influence over them.

Moreover the great schism and fearful departure from the Christian covenant on the one hand, in the Society farther west [Hicksism] has furnished the enemy with vast and powerful machinery, to delude, deceive, and draw off, from the same covenant on the other hand, insomuch that many of those who were not caught in the snare of that apostacy, have been of late in great jeopardy, by the influence and insidious sentiments of persons of genius, high standing, and great learning in

the schools of men, tending to draw away from the same gospel covenant in an opposite direction.

These having lost, or never found that hidden treasure of this covenant as revealed by the Divine Power in the inner man of the heart, have taken offence at the law and the restraints of a meek and lowly Saviour, and so far imbibed the spirit of this world and of the age, as to despise the foolishness of the Cross, which is the power of God and the wisdom of God, and not of man, nor of the flesh, but of God.

Instead of submitting, therefore, to die with Christ, and to abide the painful struggle of yielding up the will and wisdom of the flesh, these have moulded and fashioned to themselves a substitute, by professionally extolling and claiming the faith of Christ's incarnate sufferings and propitiatory sacrifice upon the Cross without the gates of Jerusalem, as the *whole* covenant of salvation, and by Him thus accomplished without them; and, consequently, it is feared are carnally believing and trusting in this alone for justification, without its essential concomitant, the true obedience of faith, and the work of sanctification wrought in the heart.

These views, and many other of the like tendency, having been avowed and published by Joseph John Gurney, a member and professed minister of the Society of Friends in Norwich, Old England, and spread far and wide among Friends, have been the cause of great uneasiness and much dissatisfaction in the minds of faithful Friends; and the more, because many are found among us who are disposed to advocate and defend the author of them, without, and in the refusal of an examination of his published sentiments, or a comparison of them with our acknowledged and well known doctrines.

The fact that the author of these views is a man of

great influence, and having many supporters of a similar description, does indeed give cause for much alarm among the living members of this Society, well knowing, as they do, by the history of things that are past, as well as by those which have transpired in their own time, that the existence of these troubles, in the church of Christ, as occasioned by an apostacy from sound doctrines, have always had their beginning in a little obvious diverging, or departure from some essential points of doctrine.

As two direct lines which begin to diverge from each other, (though barely apparent at first,) if they continue, will, in time, come to be at a great distance asunder.

So these have seen, that when men of a strong and independent temperament begin to depart from the fundamental testimonies and doctrines of a religious society, they go wider and wider therefrom, until a great departure from the true meridian is affected, or, to speak more plainly, until they adopt sentiments entirely foreign to those from which they at first, (but perceivably,) departed.

Some of these concerned Friends, who have remained at their posts, have watched over the "landmarks" of Israel's inheritance, as they have watched over their own souls, and can but tremble for the safety of the Ark of his testimonies, when, with their eyes, they behold the demolishing of those stakes, of which the good Shepherd of the fold ordained that "not one of them should be removed."

And, notwithstanding what they have fearfully beheld, of that which they apprehended was an attempt to obliterate and to cancel those distinguishing signals of our profession and its defence, they have marvelled to hear so many of the watchmen cry peace! peace! when the

citadel itself is beset by a troop of strong men. They believe that so great a loss cannot otherwise be sustained, either by us or by the world at large, as would be sustained by the breaking down of our distinguishing doctrines and testimonies. And, consequently they see the great necessity of keeping a single eye to their safety, and a scrupulous watchfulness against "every appearance of evil," that may in the least forebode an apostacy of principle, inasmuch as such did happen, to a sorrowful extent, to the primitive church—the best of bodies—and that too by small beginnings.

Furthermore, these concerned friends have felt not a little responsibility resting upon themselves, and upon the church at large, by reason of the committal to its charge and keeping of the most exalted, efficient, and dignified principles vouchsafed to the hand of man in these modern times, or in any age of the world, because they are the same as committed to the primitive church, in all that relates to Christian redemption and salvation. And they have also felt something of the weight of that appeal which was made of God to his Servant, the Prophet Ezekiel, chap. iii, 28; also xxxiii, 8–9. "If thou do not warn my people from their ways, they shall die in their iniquity, but their blood will I require at thy hands," &c.

Moreover, the late attempts at innovation, by those above alluded to, speak loudly as a warning to us of the jeopardy which awaits us as a people; for our unfaithfulness and disloyalty to the blessed Truth is such, that Satan appears to have availed himself of the advantage of our relaxation, and seems resolved to divide and scatter us from the true faith; still we hear the cry of peace! still we hear the language of safety reiterated among us! still we see a prevalent disposition to trust in man, and to make flesh our arm!

SELECTIONS

FROM THE CORRESPONDENCE.

FROM MOSES BROWN.

“ Providence, 23d of 8th mo. 1833.

[This letter commences by referring to a communication from Thomas Shillitoe to Stephen Gould, then recently received of which he says:]

“I found it to contain as full a statement of matters in England, and, in some respects, more so than thou had mentioned; its date is since their last Yearly Meeting, at which their revisal of the Discipline was completed. He says, in effect, that a party there charge Barelay with contradicting himself—that he has done great injustice to the Scriptures, by placing them as the secondary instead of the primary means of salvation. Perhaps this may be a mistaken understanding of the case, as it seems too bad to hold, by any professing with us. He says the enemy has laid his snare there in a different way from Hicksism. By some the Son is set up above the Father; and mere faith in the atonement and blood of Christ is held to be sufficient for salvation (very little inward work). These doctrines are securing for them the right hand of fellowship from other professors, as it is to be feared is the case with some in America; and those who adhere to the ancient faith and doctrine are stigmatized with the appellation of Hicksites.” . .

—*Jour. and Corres.*, pp. 176, 177.

FROM JOHN BARCLAY.

"Croyden, 5th of 10th mo., 1834.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Most fully do I, and many more unite in all thou hast conveyed both in those lines (referring to a letter then recently received from J. W.) and in every line I have heard read as coming from thy pen, and especially in those clear views thou hast received, to give forth as I do believe, relative to the state of the church, past, present, and to come. And my heart, with the hearts of many in this land, does indeed salute thee, and bid thee God speed on thy journey, travail, and service; desiring that no man or thing may hinder thee from doing all thou hast, in thy measure and in thy day, to do for Him and His glory, for His cause and people, while life and strength are graciously vouchsafed. Oh, how often have I remembered thee and thought of thee, as one whom the Lord has made use of in an eminent manner, while on thy visit to these Islands, to uncover and bring out to view the working of the wily enemy, as it is this day, and to manifest the path of the Just One, and the work of God in and among his people. . . .

"Some of those who once were in esteem, have said Penington's writings had better be put into a heap and burned; while on the other hand a preacher at Brighton, who preaches in his own chapel without pay, and is flocked to, recommended publicly to his hearers Penington's Letters, and in consequence Friends there were applied to for the book! Oh, surely there is a goodly company without our pale who may even take the places and the crowns too of those, be they who they may, who desert the cause which once was dear to them, and which they honored, but now seek to undermine, lay waste, or make of none effect, endeavoring to lower the standard,

and make it square with their own notions and practice. . . . No convulsion awaits us, as with you; it might be better for us if it were so. No, no; the enemy is wiser than to foment this; he would not hurt us for the world; no, only let us be induced to give up the true foundation for another, and he promises so gently and peaceably to glide us on it, that we shall not know it, except that it will be less rugged and hard to flesh and blood, without any cross or struggle, and there shall be nothing taken from us that we affect to prize, such as our customs and traditions, our church system, and so forth, nothing shall be disturbed of all this, and all the professors and the world too shall love us the better! A new edition of J. J. Gurney's *Peculiarities, with additions*, has passed a committee of the Morning Meeting, of which I was one. Oh, it made my heart sick to attend it, only that my Master whispers, 'All these things must needs come to pass — but see that ye be not troubled.' . . . And in this book of which I speak, thou mayst see far more open, palpable proof (in an additional chapter on worship and ministry) that thy sentiments, expressed in thy 'Letters,' are indeed true, or rather short of the whole truth. It is needful I should say, I protested in my feeble way, against the tendency of the whole chapter, telling the committee and the author, that the contrast was strong between that and 'Barclay's Apology.' . . . Oh, that all who are not with us, would even go out from us, and show their true colors; it would be more honorable than to be endeavoring to insinuate something else among us, which our fathers could not, neither can we adopt; nay, which we have protested against, and came out from, when we became a people." — *Jour. and Corres.*, pp. 197–200.

FROM SARAH [LYNES] GRUBB.

“Stoke Newington, 5th of 6th mo., 1833.

DEAR AND VALUED FRIEND,

My address to thee must be short, for I have been much engaged from day to day during this Yearly Meeting, having in the intervals of the various sittings, many Friends at my lodging in town, and at night a house full here, besides visits from elders, etc. Oh, how often have I thought of thee! and how painfully have thy forebodings of mischief among us been realized! Alas, the enemy of all good has prevailed to no very limited extent; and the insidious spirit that showed itself last year, appears now to be mighty indeed, speaking great swelling words, and, for the most part, has had the pre-eminence both in meetings for worship and discipline. This being permitted, has, however, opened the eyes of many, who were before unwilling to think that things among us were such as called for alarm. I, for one, am rather relieved, in the *open* manifestation of error in doctrine that has taken place. I wished for farther opportunity to lay down my burden in the meeting at large, and requested it, without effect; but am satisfied in doing what I could. There have been awful moments among us, when the state of things was clearly laid open in Truth's own authority. I understand that a visit from the elders is impending for me; may I be enabled to keep in the quiet, holy habitation. The same individuals who were crying, peace, peace, last year, have done so, this year, with increased boldness; yea, a lying spirit is gone forth, and many are believing it; yet some are distinctly evincing the true spirit of prophecy, which declares against all that would devise an easier way to glory, than by the true ladder. . . .

Farewell,—my husband and children love John Wilbur. Hoping we may be near in spirit still, I remain thy afflicted and affectionate friend,

SARAH GRUBB.

Jour. and Corres., pp. 182, 183.

FROM GEORGE CROSFIELD.

“Liverpool, 7th mo. 23d, 1834.

Speaking of John Warren’s expected religious visit to England, he says:—

“We shall receive him as a brother, and as one attached to the ancient views of Friends; if he supports those views, as I trust he will, bonds and afflictions and even persecutions await him in this land. I hope he will be preserved; but it is wonderful how some with you have coincided with the innovating class here.” . . . I annex an extract from a letter of James Backhouse of York, dated Hobartown, in Van Diemen’s Land, 10th mo., 12th, 1833, as follows: “We are greatly comforted by reading John Wilbur’s letters; it is real cause for thankfulness that he has been enabled to point out the dangers attendant upon the Christian’s path, both on the right hand and on the left. I hope the Divine blessing may rest on his labors, and that those who have been like to be jostled off the foundation by conflicting views, may become settled thereon in soundness of faith, doctrine and practice, and know what it is to have salt in themselves. If persons would look upon the pages of Holy Scripture, as direction-posts on the way of the Christian traveler, but not as the way itself, they would not get far wrong. And it only says little for the degree in which any have the eyes of their understanding enlightened when they begin to mistake the direction-posts for the road, and to fancy that they are

traveling on, because they now and then read them. If they read them without regard to the way they point, they may read them and even go the wrong way; but if with diligence they attend to their direction, and continue to pass on from faith to faith, they will find that their joy will be greatly increased by observing that they make progress, and that their progress is proved by the lessons taught from Holy Scripture according with those learned in the way of experience, and those learned in the way of experience according with those taught by Holy Scripture.” — *Pp.* 194, 195.

FROM DANIEL WHEELER.

Written from the vessel “Heury Freeling” dated “Papieta Bay, Island of Otaheite, 5th mo. 21, 1835.”

After an interesting and touching account of his own trials and sufferings, (including the loss of his dear wife) during a long detention prior to starting on the voyage for the accomplishment of the great work in which he was then engaged, of which close provings he says: —

“What my Master did, I knew not at the time, but have since known, to the comfort and consolation of my tribulated mind, and to the praise and glory of His grace. ‘What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.’” Speaking of some who censured him much, he says: —

“I think they cannot be better pointed out than by my saying, they were such as highly disapprove of ‘John Wilbur’s Letters’ published by George Crosfield, of which I am thankful, in having several copies now along with me.” — *Pp.* 203, 204.

FROM SARAH TUCKER.

"Dartmouth, 1st mo. 19th, 1836.

. . . "Although I do not go much abroad and am much secluded from my friends—particularly so this winter—that I get but little information how the times are; yet it seems to me that it is rather a low, poor time in the general, and this poverty I fear is not the worst; is it not a season of distress, of great perplexity, of darkness and of treading down, a day in which we are called to mourning and lamentation! and in which the priests, the Lord's ministers, have to weep, as between the porch and the altar, saying, 'Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach?' Such indeed are my feelings, but most gladly would I be informed that I am altogether mistaken. But, notwithstanding, my dear friend, I do feel, at seasons, some encouragement; a little light now and then breaks forth, by which it is clearly seen that all those who adhere to good old Joshua's resolution, let others do as they may, they will serve the Lord, and that in his own way, (which is the way of the Cross,) and not in the will and wisdom of the natural man; will be preserved, although sharp may be their conflicts and deep their baptisms. Yet He who knoweth those who are his, who beholdeth purity of intention and cleanness of heart with Divine approbation, will not suffer a hair of their head to be hurt; so that amidst all the commotion, the jars and the rents, the ups and the downs within our borders, I humbly trust and believe that a precious remnant will escape, whose lives will be given them for a prey. O! that thou mayst not faint or give back in the day of battle, when called upon to stand for the faith, even that precious faith which was once delivered to the saints. I believe

thou hast nobly stood therefor, and that thou wilt continue to do so, whatever thou mayst suffer; and it seemed as if I might just offer thee a word of encouragement, as I feel it to arise at this time, although I know I am addressing one whose experience in all those things doth far, very far exceed my own. Thou art not alone, I can assure thee, in thy tribulated path;—I believe there are not a few who are in the same way, who go bowed down all the day long, whose hearts are pained within them, who are dismayed at the seeing and hearing of those things which are floating within the borders of our once highly favored Society. Indeed is not this the language of some of the little remnant, ‘Oh! that mine head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people?’ In my retired moments my heart is sometimes raised in desire and humble prayer to the God and Father of all our sure mercies, for the prosperity of the true Church, that her broken walls may be repaired, and her desolated gates again set up, her stakes strengthened and her cords lengthened—that she may yet break forth, both on the right hand and on the left, and may yet shake herself from every defilement, and thus become an eternal excellency, the joy of the whole earth!”

. . . . — *Pp.* 210, 211.

REPLY—JOHN WILBUR TO SARAH TUCKER.

“ Providence, 5th mo. 6th, 1836.

“Thy last salutation, my dear friend, was received in due season, and was truly cordial to my mind, bringing with it a savory evidence of that which unites in one and makes glad the hearts of those who love the blessed appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; and by this renewed evidence and assurance I feel no reserve at all in writing

freely to thee, as to a sister beloved, in the bonds of gospel love and fellowship, in Him who hath in his tender mercies favored us to drink together of the one spirit.

I have read thy letter again and again, and I can assure thee that as oft as I have read it I have been refreshed and comforted; and now, while writing, I am made to feel thankful to the God and Father of all our sure mercies, that there are here and there to be found those who are traveling and laboring together, in the spirit of their minds, for the safety of the Lord's people, and for the keeping of his testimonies. My desire and prayer for this precious few, is, that they may not only receive their daily supplies of strength from the everlasting and inexhaustible Fountain of life and power, but by often speaking one to another, and communing one with another as well secretly as expressively, they may be a strength one to another. And I do account it a great favor that personal separation and distance in the world, cannot deprive these of such sweet communion; they are often led by the same blessed Hand, sometimes to the test of their faith, in the deep waters of Jordan, and sometimes to a full confirmation of it by marvellous deliverances. These become thereby qualified, in the living experience of God's providences, to be helpful in 'building one another up in the most holy faith.' Well, then my beloved sister and fellow-traveler, let us avail ourselves of his mercies in permitting us to joy in one another's joys as well as to sorrow in one another's sorrows. And although more constantly watching over ourselves, and engaged in intercessions for our own preservation, yet these exercises are sometimes swallowed up in the greater concern for the keeping and spreading of the testimonies of Truth, and the preservation of the Lord's people everywhere."—*Pp.* 211, 212.

FROM JOHN BARCLAY.

“Hastings, in Sussex, 8th mo., 1837.

. “Oh! beloved friend, thou that saw the first seeds and dawning of that which has now manifested itself in degree, knowest well enough how much of the same nature and root we still have, to oppress and afflict us, and of which it is difficult to particularize, or speak closely, in the abstract, without allusions to individuals who give uneasiness. The author of ‘Truth Vindicated,’ Henry Martin, has, by that book and the others he has since written, done what I consider to be, in some respects, a similar service to that of thyself in thy published letters; he has opened up the radical causes of distinction between the early and the modern Friends, and their opponents. I hope thou hast seen all his publications, especially the recent ones, continued in letters No. 1 and No. 2, and a third is soon expected, which is to contain strictures on J. J. Gurney’s ‘Brief Remarks on Impartiality in the Interpretation of Scripture,’ &c., in which J. J. G. takes the modern and usual professor-like view of many texts, which may be called Quaker texts, and which we have appreciated and made use of differently from others. The pamphlet of J. J. G.’s in MS., was examined by our poor Morning Meeting, and declined to be passed; it was at that time appended to his lamentable ‘Strictures on Truth Vindicated.’ He then *privately published* it, as we may say, that is, printed it for private circulation, not for sale; and, in consequence, it was the more rare and sought for, and MS. copies were taken. It is my full belief, that all the outcry against Friends will be overruled for the good of the Church, and spread of the gospel principles we profess; and I long that all who

cannot see with us would honestly go their ways from us, and we should be the stronger, purer people, and take more root downward, &c. But it is a disingenuous, dark, unworthy spirit that possesses them, and they seek, by remaining among us, gradually to unhinge and weaken us, and if possible, to refine and divest us of what is intrinsic and indispensable. The best among other persuasions sympathize with us; they like the old-fashioned cut of Quakerism, and wish us to be faithful to our principles; but it is the mass of high-professing people, that are riveted to their sect and system, who rejoice in our divisions and hope to gain some from us."
 — *Pp.* 225–228.

FROM JONATHAN EVANS.

"Philadelphia, 9th mo. 11th, 1837.

"I received thy letter, and am glad to find that there are some yet left, who are not carried away by the stream of popularity and fashionable opinions, which now seems threatening to overwhelm our poor, tried, religious Society. Oh, the want of weight and depth which is strikingly evident in our meetings, both for worship and discipline. When met to transact the affairs of the Church, what a cringing and crouching to those noted for much worldly wisdom, and abundance of the riches of this world; so that indeed, the pure influence of the Spirit is seldom sought after or expected; it being considered only mysticism or, at best, but undefined, imaginary sensations, not safe to follow; and that which the Lord hath determined a death upon, is kept alive, and made the chief agent in conducting the concerns of Society, which if rightly understood is surely the Lord's business. The conduct of the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and

Elders in London, is really very affecting. This man J. J. Gurney, because he has written much, is considered very learned, highly polished, and an acute reasoner; and being very rich, and living in high style, is greatly caressed, and esteemed as almost a prodigy among us. I have perused a great deal of his writings, and have been sorely distressed at the darkness and confusion which is almost inseparable from their contents.

The Hebrew and Greek languages being very limited, one word in them will sometimes embrace several significations, some of which will be in entire contrast with others; this he has caught at, and then made use of these opposite senses to vary the present translation of the Scriptures, and to promote his purpose in undervaluing and contradicting the solid sense and judgment of our ancient Friends, that he may the more readily introduce and propagate Episcopalian doctrines. He tries to make out that the eating of the flesh, and drinking the blood of Christ, means a belief in his incarnation, thus lowering down that deep experience and blessed fellowship in spirit with the Lord Jesus, in his baptisms and sufferings, to a mere assent of the human mind—that the gospel which is preached in or to every human being, means the outward preaching of the gospel doctrines, that is, the declaration of the atonement of Christ; that the name of Jesus does not signify his power, but only to ask of the Father that he would grant our petitions, merely because of his beloved Son, Jesus Christ; that therefore we are not to look for the immediate influence of the Spirit as a qualification to pray, but to push forward into this offering whenever we incline to it; and many other changes he makes which I can call by no other name than perversions. He endeavors to make out that our primitive Friends were under mistaken

views; in order that he may, with more facility, lay waste our attachment to the doctrines and testimonies they held, and prepare us to embrace new schemes which will be more acceptable to the unregenerate man; liberate us from the mortifying operation of the cross of Christ, and cause us as a Society, to be more respected by the carnal, superficial professors of religion in the several denominations." . . . — *Pp.* 228–230.

Before concluding this letter Jonathan Evans quotes from Thomas Shillitoe's dying testimony concerning Joseph John Gurney in which he said:—

"I declare him to be an Episcopalian, not a Quaker. I apprehend Joseph John Gurney is no Quaker in principle. Episcopalian views were imbibed from his education and still remain with him."

FROM MARGARET CROSFIELD.

"Liverpool, 2d mo. 23d, 1838.

. . . . "I can never forget thy acceptable labors and company amongst us; thou came in a critical time, and wast the means of preserving my husband and me from swerving from the Truth; we saw not the danger until thou came, but I fear through sophistry and delusion, and undue confidence in some, we should have slidden off, and been now like some once of high standing, who are now wandering from mountain to hill, unsettled from waiting on the true Teacher, and seeking water from broken cisterns; anxiety and unhappiness depicted so legibly on some of their visages as to be apparent to all who see them. Since thou wast here what a sea of troubles have some of us passed through! and in degree do yet; but thou knowest what a bitter separating spirit can produce where it gets in; its arrows

have been directed against thee even in this land, in this house, and in my presence — a poor return for thy labor of love in coming as a gospel messenger amongst us. .

. “That the written works of Joseph John Gurney were the foundation of the present secession, [that of Beaconism] I undoubtedly believe. Many that have left have declared they were the first things that led them to these new views, it was so declared publicly by several of them to the London Committee.”
 — *P.* 231.

FROM LYDIA A. BARCLAY.

“Reigate, Surrey, 6th mo. 21st, 1841.

“Ah! my dear friend, it is *so* cheering and strengthening to hear from thee; it seems to give one a little lift amid the trials of the day, although thy account was indeed a mournful one; — how painful, that those who are leaders of the people, and should be patterns of good things, should show that such a wrong spirit is ruling in them! I do, indeed, very tenderly sympathize with thee under such suffering as thou must go through, and one’s heart seemed filled with praise and admiration of that divine Power who enables his humble, faithful servants and children to wax valiant in fight, and preserves them in the meekness of true wisdom; and I do trust thou wilt be supported to the end through all that may be permitted to come upon thee in the unflinching ‘defence of the gospel.’” — *P.* 343.

FROM THE SAME.

“Reigate, 24th of 6th mo., 1842.

“Oh, how strikingly applicable to us as a people, are those parts of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel which are

addressed to backsliding Israel formerly! And is there not danger of the language going forth, ‘Shall I not visit for these things? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?’ And yet when the Lord is evidently calling us to weeping and mourning and girding with sack-cloth for the backsliding and adultery amongst us, yea, for the abominations committed by the elders of Israel, ‘behold joy and gladness;’ a boasting of good times and things amongst us, and a saying like some of old, ‘Is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us!’ And it was said to such, ‘Therefore shall Zion for your sakes be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps!’” . . . — *P.* 352.

FROM ANN JONES.

“Stockport, 11th mo. 16th, 1841.

“I have long wished for a little feeling of ability to give thee a written proof of my sisterly sympathy with thee in and under the protracted suffering which has fallen to thy lot, for thy faithfulness in supporting the doctrines, the principles, and testimonies given to our dear forefathers, and to us as their representatives, to bear to the world. . . . ‘Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them *all*.’ . . . May patience have its perfect work, and may the faith once delivered to the saints be steadily maintained and boldly contended for, when its blessed Author leads into the field — the armor kept on in brightness, waiting the word of command to go forth, or to stand still, then we have nothing to fear. Farewell in the Lord.”—*Pp.* 348-9.

FROM THE SAME.

“Stockport, 10th mo. 25th, 1842.

“Dear Sarah Grubb’s prophecies are fulfilling in a remarkable manner, and I doubt not her persevering faith-

fulness to the end, will afford lasting comfort and encouragement to many a little, hidden, suffering disciple of the blessed Master. With what clearness, authority, and power, did she declare at the close of one of our women's Yearly Meetings, 'The testimonies and standard of Truth will *not* be permitted to fall to the ground, friends;' and after speaking of great scattering and desolation that was coming upon the Society, she continued, 'there will be a little, living, suffering remnant preserved to support them, and after they have suffered awhile there will be a flocking to this standard &c.'"—*P.* 356.

FROM EZRA COMFORT.

"Whitemarsh, Pa., 2d mo. 17th, 1843.

DEARLY BELOVED FRIEND,

"I trust I can thus address thee in the fellowship of that gospel, which is the bond of everlasting peace—in that nearness and unity which I felt with thy spirit when thou came into my room in Philadelphia, the remembrance of which has often been precious to me, although I was a stranger, as to the outward, yet not so within. My mind has often been drawn into near, and tender sympathetic feeling, with, and for thee, and under that feeling I am induced to take my pen in hand, though I seldom do so, to endeavor to encourage and strengthen thee to keep hold of thy shield of faith, and not cast it away as though it had not been anointed; for it has been anointed thou knowest, and has kept thee through many tribulations, both by sea and land, as well as amongst false brethren unto this day, and I pray the Father of all our sure mercies, that we may be favored to keep it in the patience unto the end. . . . And now, my dear brother, before I took my pen in hand I thought I felt this testimony, and I believed it was from the Lord; 'Fear not, my dear servant, I have permitted this suffering to come upon thee

for my righteous cause and my testimony's sake ; I will be with thee, and though thou pass through the waters, they shall not overflow thee ; though thou walk through the fire, it shall not burn thee, and through the flames they shall not kindle upon thee, and I will make of thee yet further an instrument in my hand, to my honor and to my glory, in a way thou hast not yet seen, and it shall add to thy rejoicing while yet here, and to thy eternal joy hereafter.' — I have no doubt there are many amongst you as well as amongst us who would, if they were to see the language I have used in describing that deceitful spirit which is endeavoring to divide us asunder, call it harsh ; but the time has come when it is right for every one to speak the plain truth to his neighbor, of what he is favored to see of the workings of this dark deceptive spirit." .

—*Pp.* 361, 362.

FROM ANN JONES.

" Stockport, 1st of 4th mo., 1843.

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER IN THE BONDS AND TRIBULATIONS OF
THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD, —

" Although *men* may separate thee from their company, may reject and deny thee the privileges of a minister and member in our once highly favored society, yet they can no more separate thee from the living body, whereof Jesus Christ is the true and holy head, than the persecutors of our dear faithful Friends in the beginning could separate them from Him, the true and living Vine, whence they derived their sap and nourishment, their unity and strength, to stand against all the wiles and stratagems, and cunning, subtle snares of Satan and his agents. Then be not faint-hearted, neither fear, but lift up thy head in *hope* ; believing that thy deliverance from all the power of the enemy draweth near,

whether thy natural eyes may see Jacob and Israel rejoice and be glad, because that the Lord most high hath redeemed and delivered them, yea or nay. . . . Plaintive and true, as the lamentation over Israel is, in thy truly acceptable letter of 12th mo., 20th, yet I could but rejoice and give thanks in finding how sweetly thy mind has been sustained, by an invisible hand, through much crimination and oppression. Well, the power of thy accusers and oppressors is limited; and whilst I doubt not thou hast many times had cause to be and hast been comforted in considering Him who endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, and hast thereby been kept from growing weary of suffering or fainting in thy mind; I can and do earnestly desire for thee that thy faith may be renewed and strengthened from time to time, not only to commit thy cause unto Him, and to trust in his holy Name, but also to remember that the cause is His with whom is the power to bring good out of that which seemeth at the time, to finite short-sighted mortals, to be what may be termed evil, as the 'blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church,' and the shedding of the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, was the purchase of our redemption. When the poor disciples were dismayed at what had happened, and said even to himself, 'We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel,' ah, then how little did they think that they were speaking to their crucified and risen Lord!" . . . — *Pp.* 365-6.

FROM JOHN HARRISON.

"Manchester, 7th mo. 1st, 1845.

MY DEAR FRIEND JOHN WILBUR,

"Thy volume of proceedings* has been delivered to me by an unknown hand, with my name written on one of the

*J. Wilbur's "Narrative and Exposition."

blank pages, apparently in thy hand writing. If thou art the sender thereof, I am much obliged for thy valuable present; and still more do I feel myself indebted for thy lucid, valiant exposure of those errors and doings which have too long been a burden to many honest Friends. Oh, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, and an awful consideration to forsake His most Holy Word, to deny his ever blessed, living eternal truth, by attempting to reduce the same into a dead letter, or in any way to deny the Lord's Christ.

I remember many years ago, when Beaconism, in a smouldering state, had almost stultified the energies of our large meeting, and *three* of us—comparatively strangers in it, and to one another—had to contest the whole body on subjects of vital importance; we perceiving, before many others that there was at work a deep, secret scheme to undermine and subvert the true doctrines of Quakerism, under the specious pretence of avoiding the dangerous errors of Hicksism, and of evangelizing the whole town and neighborhood! I well remember, with unfeigned thankfulness, the coming forth of thy valuable 'Letters,' just at the right juncture, when they were most required to strengthen our doubting minds and to confirm the secret feelings by which we were made very sensible, not only of our own unworthiness and inability to move rightly in our own wisdom and strength, but that the head and heart amongst us were sadly sick. By thy pamphlet, addressed to my cousin, George Crosfield of Liverpool, our vision was cleared to see that as you in America had, through unwatchfulness, glided off the right foundation on one side, even so we in this country were gradually slipping from it in an opposite direction—both being the cunning, cruel work of Abaddon. *You* were all for Christ within to the neglect of the great sacrifice whereby we are put into a capacity to

be saved, and a slighting of the history as recorded in the Scriptures of Truth, which were also disparaged by you; *we*, for 'Christ without' and the history, not caring much about the *mystery* of religion, so that we could exalt the letter high enough, even above the Spirit which gave forth the Scriptures most surely to be believed. Hence the kingdom of Christ becoming divided in both instances, the enemy gained his point.

. I have read every syllable of thy book, and am affected to find that men calling themselves Christians, nay, highly-professing Christians of our name, should so far forget themselves and the rules of common respectability as to descend, as they have done, into those acts of injustice and intolerance which should shame a heathen to commit. I am lending the work to all my acquaintance who can appreciate it, and on one of the fly leaves I have written the following inscription, viz: —

'John Wilbur and his book. — The New Englanders may attempt a reply to this volume. They may and most likely will, put forth a vindication of their conduct, and try to neutralize the statement made by this dear, persecuted Friend and able minister of the gospel. One thing they cannot accomplish. Do what they will, they cannot disturb the great groundwork, the structure and super-structure of the case. They can as easily change the skin of the Ethiopian, as alter the complexion of, and make sound the unsound doctrines of Joseph John Gurney as they are palpably manifest in his writings. This is my strong conviction on the perusal of this most interesting, extraordinary and highly important volume, coupled with my previous knowledge of the works of J. J. G.
J. H., 6th mo. 2d, 1845.'

I consider thy separation grievous and extremely unjust, but I reckon its importance to thyself of small moment compared with the effect it will have in a

Society point of view. I consider the act as a lawless, reckless dash at the principle which unites us; and all true Friends are concerned therein. If one member suffer, then do all the living members and the living body suffer also. Distance, rank, estimation in the world, cannot destroy the sympathy of the members and of the body, so long as Christ continues to be the head of his true church, which he ever will.

Wishing thee well in the true acceptation of the term, I subscribe myself thy very affectionate friend,

JOHN HARRISON."

Pp. 397-8-9.

FROM EZRA COMFORT.

"Whitemarsh, 8th mo. 22d, 1845.

MY DEAR FRIEND JOHN WILBUR,

"I think I can truly address thee as such in the fellowship of suffering. I have just received and read what the Gurneyite Yearly Meeting [of N. E.] call a statement of facts, in which they endeavor to cover and screen themselves from blame, but by this endeavor they greatly expose themselves, by showing their profession and conduct to be inconsistent and irreconcilable with each other. By their history of facts, as they would call it, they charge thee with being the whole cause of all the disorders and difficulty amongst them, and that it has all grown out of thy indulging in a spirit of detraction, just as I was falsely charged [in the Hicksite troubles], but when they come to show wherein thou hast offended in this respect, they show by their proceedings, it has all grown out of thy declaring the doctrinal views of J. J. Gurney as published by himself to be unsound, and by doing so thou hast injured his character and hurt his services as a minister of the Society of Friends, for which they have dealt with and disowned thee, at the same time denying that this is

what they have disowned thee for. Then they go about to justify and cover themselves under the certificate granted J. J. G. by London Yearly Meeting, thus tacitly acknowledging they will receive and unite with a minister whom they know to be unsound, if he carry such certificate with him; but if any should venture to say the views he has written and published himself, are unsound, let them be ever so much so, it is the highest grade of detraction, contrary to discipline and long established order, and sufficient ground to disown them upon. Thus whilst endeavoring to justify their inconsistency, and the base persecution they have been guilty of, they have not considered that they are condemning London Yearly Meeting in the case of Hannah Barnard, and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in the case of Elias Hicks, but they take the same course against sound Friends, and justify themselves in the very same way that the Hicksites did with us, pretending to support good order, whilst they were openly and barefacedly committing disorder, and shamelessly and falsely charging sound Friends that were supporting the order of the Society with committing disorder—thus abundantly manifesting that they make lies their refuge, — and we find by the history that has been preserved by the Society from its earliest period, that when individuals or bodies have joined with those who were once in the Truth and were favored instruments while they kept in it, but who have apostatized and departed from their first principles, it has been wonderfully remarkable how these have all pursued the same course, and have made lies their refuge.

With much love to thee, thy family, and all thy dear suffering friends, as if named, I remain thy friend,

EZRA COMFORT.”

—*Pp.* 401–2–4.

FROM CHRISTOPHER HEALY.

“ Bucks County, Pennsylvania, 2d of 6th mo., 1847.

MY VERY DEAR AND MUCH BELOVED FRIEND JOHN WILBUR,

. “ Maythou, my dear brother in the Truth, be comforted and filled with joyful hope, for greater is He that is in thee, than he that is in the world; this thou hast clearly proved, by thy great suffering, for thy divine Master’s and the church’s sake. May he be pleased to make bare his holy arm of power, for thy health, both in spirituals and temporals. I have often thought of thy dear bosom friend, how she must be tried as well as thee, in that long and sore warfare. May our blessed Helper be very near to strengthen you to bear up, now in your old age. I have divers times read thy ‘Narrative’ as well as some other accounts, and I thought nothing short of Divine power could have carried thee so remarkably through. Thou hast heard by this time I suppose that our Yearly Meeting this year, condemned the unsound writings of Joseph John Gurney, and also of Edward Ash, and the document after our next Meeting for Sufferings will be published. Oh! my dear brother, this is a sifting time to the members of our Society. I have believed our poor Society will yet be sifted as wheat is sifted in a sieve, for it is declared, ‘I will overturn, overturn, overturn, saith the Lord, until he shall come whose right it is to rule and reign.’ Our Israel is too much mixed among the people of the world. The language of my soul is, come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will save you. Now my dear brother in the gospel of the dear Son of God, be not discouraged at these trying times, for Zion cannot come forth out of the wilderness of this world, clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners, leaning also on her Be-

loved, until she shall arise and shake herself from the dust of the earth, and put on her beautiful garments; then she will arise with Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, and because he is the bread of life, our souls shall live also. Oh! that this blessed day might come to the church, then will judges be restored as at the first, and counsellors as at the beginning. I do believe this time will come, though a great falling away may take place first; but my dear friend, a people, a favored remnant will be preserved of the true principle and name of Quakers.

“In the great satisfaction and love which for many years we have had together and for each other, the remembrance of which now rejoices my heart, I take my leave, and remain thy affectionate friend.

CHRISTOPHER HEALY.”

—*Pp.* 421-2-3.

THE CONCLUSION TO THE "NARRATIVE AND EXPOSITION."

Containing an affectionate invitation to all the honest-hearted under our name, to hold fast the profession of the Christian faith, as recognized and most surely believed by all our faithful predecessors in the truth, as it is in Jesus Christ our Lord :—

In this invitation, the object of my desire and concern is, to persuade and exhort all (and it is in the feelings of much brotherly love and with a lively hope) to be entreated to come forward more and more in a practical consummation of the obedience of that faith which leads to the saving knowledge of God, through the revelation of Him who died for our sins and rose again for our reconciliation unto God; and who also was and is and yet to be, the Lord from Heaven, a quickening Spirit.

And first, permit me to say to you, my dear friends, that however very dear to me the rights and privileges of the militant church, in a condition owned of God; yet, (if otherwise,) how much dearer ought to be, (and not to me only, but unto every one of her children) the love of God and the owning of his approving presence, which are the fruits of the one living faith in the Son of God, and in the fundamental and inalienable doctrines of the Gospel of Christ, with the testimonies and discipline of the true church; a faithful conformity whereunto through obedience, being indispensable as a test of membership in that body, of which Christ is the Head; and therefore of the greatest consequence to every one who would desire to be a member of the true church.

And we, of the present generation, are entrusted with

the keeping of this faith, and those testimonies, through *our* day, and are bound by the strongest obligations, (inasmuch as our way has been made more easy, by the delivery into our hands of these testimonies, pure and untire by our predecessors,) to act our part faithfully, through the Lord's assistance, and tender mercies; not only in the scrupulously upholding of them ourselves, through our day and time, as a righteous standard and testimony to all men; but to deliver and hand them down to the succeeding generation, undiminished and without abatement; so that those who follow after may rejoice and gather strength by means of our unflinching uprightness and willingness to endure all things for the sake of Him who gave them to the church; and to bear the cross and to despise the shame, in the faithful endurance of self-denial in this, a day of lightly esteeming and treading down of the holy testimony of the cross of Christ, which is the power of God and wisdom of God; and remains to be a mystery which has been hid for ages from the wise and prudent,—from all the carnal professors of every age,—but revealed to the humble, and the lowly, and self-denying followers of the Lamb, of every generation.

And the importance, that we as a people, who have advanced in the faith of vital Christianity beyond others of the protestant reformation, should hold fast to the testimonies that we were at the first entrusted with, (and without the fear of man,) is strikingly apparent; lest we through a culpable relaxation should give countenance and strength to the apostacy of such other denominations as are retrograding into a sorrowful declension from their own first principles, and thereby should bring condemnation upon ourselves on their account.

How sorrowful will it be, my dear Friends, if we,

either willingly or heedlessly fall irrecoverably into the degenerating current of the day, and with the multitude go back again to the house from whence our forefathers came out, (through the cost of great tribulations,) and which return must be to the utter loss of our own souls, and to the great reproach of the holy profession handed down to us by our worthy predecessors in the truth, and would be crucifying to ourselves the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame.

As reasons for the goodly exercise of care, in watching over ourselves and guarding the church against the smaller as well as greater inlets of a departure from sound doctrine and correct practices, we may once more recur to the view of things which have transpired heretofore, as alluded to in the preface of this narrative, both in ancient and modern times, in which was noticed the sad declension of the church, under both dispensations, in relation to the Lord's statutes and doctrines delivered to her, showing that the former, though established of the Almighty himself, did not only become the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto Him, but persecuted and wickedly put his messengers to death, and finally slew the Son and sent of God, before the measure of her iniquity was full. And that the latter, even under the gospel and name of Him who came not to destroy men's lives but to save them, persecuted the messengers whom he had sent to warn them of their iniquities, and put them to death without mercy.

And the question was asked, and may again well be asked, whether the church now is better, and more secure against the danger of an apostate condition, than the primitive Christian church was? Will it not be acknowledged that the same enticements are now in the hands of the enemy as heretofore; and the same prone-

ness to evil in men now as then, to wit, the love of pleasure — the love of the world — the love of power and other degenerating propensities; and are not these as deadly now to true religion as they ever were in any age of the world?

But we know it is so. Then, O then! let every one gird up the loins of his mind, and watch — watch and pray lest we enter into temptation, and fall by the subtle delusions of the wicked one. Oh, Friends! let us dwell in the light of the Lord, that so we may see the snares of the enemy and avoid them — let us draw near and dwell in Him who is light, and in whom there is no darkness at all; and as we come to see in him, the councils of wisdom, and are made to understand his will, let us obey, whether it be in acting or in forbearing to act — whether it be in the small or in the great sacrifices, remembering that believing and obeying in the one, is the same in the sight of God, as the believing and obeying in the other. Then despise not the day of small things, but keep the covenant of obedience in the little as in the much, for the reward is as certain in the one as in the other, even peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, — for it is as we are faithful in the little, that we shall be made rulers over more, and be prepared to do more and more; and so shall our strength be increased from less to more, and as our eye is kept single to the light of the Lord in our own souls, waiting upon Him, and keeping the word of his patience in that covenant, which is as sure by night as by day — as sure in the night of trial and temptation, as in the day of deliverance and rejoicing. Hence faith and patience in the disciple's experience, are a treasure of great price, and contribute, even more largely to his growth in the saving knowledge of God, than in his more joyous seasons of feasting upon the good things of his Master's table.

Zion can only be redeemed through judgment, and her converts by righteousness; — by being plunged into the river of judgment; this must be known in the experience of every member of the true church. He must witness the sanctifying baptism and power of the Holy Ghost; and immutable justice towards all men, must be the obvious characteristic of his life and conversation, showing mercy to others as he would desire God would show mercy to him. And in so walking in the fear of the Lord, it is only that we evince by our fruits, that we love Him above all, and our neighbor as ourselves.

By the inward operation of the judgment and power of God, it is, that the members are instructed and prepared for service in the church — to be way-marks and ensamples to all men.

And among the many and important services assigned to the members respectively, there are none peradventure of greater usefulness, or of a higher order, than that of the gospel ministry — a service, than which, none has been more grossly abused — than which, no one has been more sacrilegiously counterfeited. If true and apostolic, not received of man nor by man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ — as such, it is a great blessing to the church — if false, and learned only of man and by man, and should prevail in the body under our name, it will prove an unfailing means of a degeneracy and estrangement from God, and a lapse into dead formality; and will greatly tend to draw away *from* God unto men.

So far as we know, the Society of Friends is the only people, among all the Christian denominations, since the primitive ages, who profess to preach the gospel only as the Spirit giveth utterance — who wait for the promise

of the Father on all occasions as Christ taught his disciples, to wit :— who believe it requisite to tarry until they be endued with power from on high, before they attempt to preach in God's great and holy name.

Hence the testimony of Friends, touching this high and holy calling, is at this day the most primitive, noble and dignified testimony in the world, being the only one, which recognizes a sensible, direct intercourse and communication between the heavens and the earth; or in other words, from God to the children of men.

Inasmuch, then, as the Society of Friends are the only people who hold fast to the faith, that Christianity itself has not diminished, nor fallen off, nor its gifts and graces been withdrawn from the true church, since the day when the Lord told his disciples, that the Spirit which should succeed his personal presence with them, should instruct them in all things, and bring all things to their remembrance; or since the day when he promised that he would abide with them forever, even unto the end of the world;— how desirable and indispensable for us, in the fulfillment of ancient prophecy, “ they shall all know me,” &c., and for the unspeakable benefit of the church, as well as of the world at large, that we hold fast the profession of this faith without wavering—this faith of the continued dispensation of the gift of the Holy Ghost unto them who wait for him in sincerity and humility, and believe in his power.

But this gift of God's grace and Holy Spirit, is by no means exclusively given to gospel ministers, but flows from the Vine, which is the fountain of life, to every living branch;—from Christ to every member of his body. And all the true members, whatever their respective callings are, as their hearts are open to receive, are by the anointing of his Spirit taught and instructed to fulfill

their duties and callings conformable to the will of God, and are blessed with immediate access to him, through the mediation of Christ, and without the intervention of any man.

And it is as impossible for the church of Christ to remain such, and to be a living body, without the savor and circulation of the Spirit and life of Christ, as for a tree to remain green and fruitful without the circulation of sap and nourishment from the root and from the body; or as for a man to exist in the vigor of life, without the circulation from the heart, of that blood which is the life of man.

But to return to the exercise of the gospel ministry. I feel concerned to exhort all, who are called to that solemn service, faithfully and patiently to wait, and to rely on Him alone who is the Great Minister of the sanctuary and true tabernacle which God hath pitched and not man, both for the opening and the shutting, — for strength, — for mouth and wisdom — tongue and utterance. And, above all things, having no confidence in themselves, or in the the endowment of man's wisdom; but tarry, I entreat you, (as you would desire your own furtherance, and that of your brethren,) tarry at Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high; for under the dominion of this power, (it only is) as it is waited for in the simplicity and integrity of the soul, that the work will prosper and bring peace and joy to those who are thus exercised in it; and will redound to the glory of God and the consolation of his people, whether the measure of the gift be less or more. Never, O never! let the desire for words, either in yourselves or in others, beguile you into an unsanctified offering — beguile you into a spurious ministry, or the offering of strange fire. Oh! how lamentable the condition of those where a lifeless

ministry prevails! How deadening to an assembly of Quaker worshippers, for if it come not from God, though it may please the ear, or lead to head knowledge, it is no better than a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal! How much better in the sight of God, and for the church, is silent worship, than the annoyance of a spurious ministry!

The skill and artifice of man, in framing a beautiful discourse, if it be but in man's wisdom and learning, contributes no more to the honor of God, or the salvation of souls, than would man's sagacity in forming a beautiful image of things above or things below; he can, of himself, no more breathe the breath of life into the one than into the other. And without a portion of the Divine life, which is the gift of God and testimony of Jesus, preaching is no more saving, than any other mere image of good things.

Hence the necessity that Christ's ministers, seeing they are but men, should abide with the Lord Jesus in the inner court of the heart, and "with him in his tribulations, that so they may know of his doctrines," and how to preach them,—that they may be instructed in the counsel of his will, for it is here, in the heart, that "whatsoever is to be known of him is made manifest,"—pertaining to his own glorious kingdom and the salvation of souls; which is at times made known to the messengers of his covenant, for their own qualification to minister, and for the watering and refreshing of "those who serve him," as well as for the reproof and instruction of "those who serve him not," to his own holy and blessed acceptance.

And it is only by patiently enduring the baptism of Christ and of his judgments, to the subjugation of the will of the flesh in themselves, that they can be good

stewards of the manifold grace of God, and fully prepared to divide the word aright among his people, and clearly to discern between the precious and the vile, under whatever covering such states may exist, or under whatever appearance or professions men may make; these true messengers of Christ, will not be misled, by what men have been, or by what they now profess to be.

Wherefore, my dear fellow-pilgrims in this high calling of God, grudge not, I beseech you, the conflict, or the reproaches, of drinking deeply of the Saviour's bitter cup, nor the endurance of his fiery baptisms, (for his own received him not, but slew him, and denied him), seeing that so great salvation is the result of suffering, and awaits the faithful and unflinching labors of those who are prepared by the ordeal of his power; and who have labored and have not fainted, and who have borne the burden through the heat of the day. And remember who it was, and from whence they came, whom John saw round about the throne of God, who had washed their robes and had made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

And oh! that all under our name of all classes, who name the name of Jesus, may never name Him unworthily or deceitfully, but, by departing from all iniquity, might honor him, having his fear always before their eyes, walking in all humility and lowliness before him, that so their example may do honor to the high and holy name of the Great Author of our salvation, and to the exalted profession we are making among men.

And bow, above all things, is the Christian's experience in that power of God which overcomes the world, enlarged, by frequently and continually seeking and feeling after him with the whole heart, undivided and unre-served. Oh! fellow-probationer, forget not thy morn-

ing oblation, before thy head is raised from thy pillow, but approach the altar of his sacrifices in thine own heart, for thou mayest there witness in the silence of celestial excellence, the flame of his love and holy presence to kindle upon thy offering; and then when thou goest by the way, He will also go along with thee, and when thou liest down he will keep thee, and as thy desires are unto him, he will bless thy evening sacrifices; and again, when thy slumbers are broken, in the silent watches of the night, then let not thy thoughts go astray upon things that perish, but keep and gather them inward, and stay them upon Him whose presence fills the universe; and he will become to thee the chiefest among ten thousand. But when he delayeth to come unto thee, then fasting and mourning will be thy lot; and "great searching of heart," and fearful enquiry, why he has forsaken thee, and whether thou hast not sinned against him, and gone backward, and left thy first love! Oh! this is the way by which all the holy men of old, and our worthy predecessors gained the experience of the knowledge and way of the Lord; and if thou would gain a heavenly treasure like theirs, and follow their footsteps, to a blessed establishment in the unchangeable truth, then be faithful and relax not from a daily exercise in seeking Him, and staying thy mind upon him; girding up thy loins and watching for the morning, possessing thy soul in the patience of God; confessing to him thy sins and short-comings, and asking forgiveness through Him who is the Mediator of God's covenant for reconciliation with thee; and behold he will, when it please him, and in the right time, shorten and dispel the hour and power of darkness and distress, and cause the true light again to shine into thy soul and round about thee, and will again arise himself with power

and great glory, as from the gloom of the sepulchre, and will cause thy soul to rise with him, with joy unspeakable and full of praise.

Thus described is some of the true Christian's experience, and the practical ground of his coming to the saving knowledge of God, through the revelation of Jesus Christ, and by the means of keeping a single eye to the light, and watching unto prayer without ceasing, whereby the mind is stayed and kept alive unto God, and preserved in the hour of temptation, and from being seduced and led away "by every wind of doctrine," as mere superficial professors are.

Hence, when this blessed experience is attained and abode in by a follower of Christ, his mind will not be beguiled with false doctrines or misled by designing men, though such doctrines be preached in the eloquence of the wisest, or even by an angel from heaven, because the witness is in himself, and this witness for God will evermore, as do the holy Scriptures, contradict and deny all false and delusive doctrine, because the disciple dwells with him who is light, and in whom there is no darkness at all. And therefore thus abiding in the light, no man can deceive him, nor yet the wicked one, though he might assume the appearance of an angel of light.

But when men begin to hate the light, and to depart from it, because their deeds are become evil, then their vision is darkened, and they can scarcely distinguish between an *ignis fatuus*, or the counterfeit radiance of the fallen angel, from the clear shining of the light of the Lord, and are therefore exposed to the imposition of false doctrines proffered to them in the wisdom of the serpent by his deceitful working, and by his transformations are undistinguished by those "whose vision is not clear." How lamentable the condition of those, viewing

things as they do, with a clouded imagination, or through an inverted medium, and therefore are led to call light darkness, and darkness light; good, evil; and evil, good; just like the same sort of people in the prophet's time. Here we see the great powers of transformation in the hands of the wicked one. And never better pleased was he, as would appear, nor his kingdom better served in any age, than by his success in alluring and beguiling the servants of the Lord, to become and to be his servants; and the more eminent in their former station the more so in the latter, as fully demonstrated by events which have transpired.

And how deplorable the state of those who are transformed from the image of God to a condition of unrighteousness — from the love of God to the love of the world — from the fear of God to the fear of man, and the desire of pleasing God exchanged for a greater desire of pleasing men; a condition in which man is ashamed acceptably to acknowledge the Redeemer before a man who shall die, and the son of man who shall perish.

Of those who regard men more than they regard Him, he will be ashamed before his Father and the holy angels, and will not therefore be a mediator between *them* and their God, whom they have despised, and have more lightly esteemed Him than they have esteemed men.

With such there must be a fearful looking for of judgment, and the righteous indignation of God's displeasure, because they have more lightly esteemed the favor of, and fear of God, than the persons and friendship of men, which is idolatry and great offence in His sight.

Our Lord and Saviour describes the contrast between the fear of man and the fear of God in a very striking manner, and gives forth His command to fear God

rather than man, in despite of the utmost that man can do: "Fear not them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but I will forewarn you, whom ye ought to fear—fear Him who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell," and emphatically adds, "Yea, I say unto you, fear Him." And this command stands unabated, and is as obligatory on us as on his followers in that day.

Although men now have not power, by the laws of the land, to kill the body, or to take men's lives on account of their fidelity to God, yet there are those who have power and disposition to persecute, and to take from us that which had been almost as dear as life itself to us—our places, our rights, and our privileges in the outward visible church. A process plainly distinguishable from the law of Christ, as will appear by a recurrence to the pattern of church government, as well as the doctrines received and acknowledged aforetime by the whole body, under the acknowledged guidance of the spirit of Christ.

Therefore, when those who teach us doctrines, and hold the rein of church government over us, shall have unhappily departed from that pattern, then fear them not, nor reverence them, for they will begin to deny the Master's coming, and to beat the men servants and the maid servants, and to lord it over the heritage of God.

Now, here is the difference, those who are ordained of the Holy Ghost to teach and to rule in his church, are both to be regarded and honored, so long as they rule in righteousness. But when their garments become defiled with enmity or the love of power, or the love of filthy lucre, or their eye becomes evil, then their hearts are become dark, and their hands full of oppression, and their arm but an arm of flesh. And he that

continueth to transfer to them the honor which only belongeth unto God, or to trust in them, is accursed of the Lord, though *they* may shine as stars of great magnitude over the tabernacles of Esau; they are no longer to be called by the name of Jacob, nor surnamed by the name of Israel, so long as they disregard Israel's statutes and testimonies.

Hence we see the necessity of wisdom from above, and a clear discernment of the states and conditions of men, aside from prepossession, favor or friendship; aside from relationship and all *former* estimations, outward circumstances or outward appearances; and aside too from the estimation of others. When the condition of men is seen in the light, and their views, practices and motives are not answerable to the pattern as above, then let the loyal disciple of him in whom there is no shadow of turning, and who is to give account, and bear a faithful testimony against such in all meekness and lowliness, move in the fear of the Lord, and trust in his providence and power, and then he has nothing to fear from men, nor from a host of the mighty, for as he so continue and abide in the everlasting patience in the secret place of the Almighty, whose refuge will be round about him, and his banner over him; and for all the sufferings, revilings and evil reports which he shall have to endure, the reward from his blessed Master's hand will be an hundred fold in this present world, and in that which is to come, everlasting life.

And the writer is induced to believe, through the opening of truth, that a remnant will be spared from the "flood of mighty waters overflowing," whilst "the beauty which is on the head of the fat valley shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer, which when he that looketh upon it, seeth; while it is yet in

his hand he eateth it up.” “In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty unto the residue of His people, and for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate, and many shall run to and fro, and the knowledge of the Lord shall be increased, and judgment shall run down as waters, and righteousness as a river—the wilderness shall become as Eden, and the desert as the garden of the Lord. Aliens shall be thy ploughmen, and strangers shall stand and feed the flock, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God.”

It has been seen by divers of the Lord’s messengers in our Israel, both earlier and later, that a great declension and sifting time would take place among us, and that a remarkable reformation and better day would succeed.

The former we have already seen sorrowfully to have been progressing, in a departure from truth’s testimonies and doctrines, by the insidious working of the enemy, drawing away from the true faith, both on the right hand and on the left. And it is believed that the day is near, (if the Lord’s purposes are not frustrated through fear or unfaithfulness in those who have been spared and called to begin the work,) when the foregoing declarations of the prophets will be verified and fulfilled in the succession of faithful messengers and standard bearers, and of a better day; and of the advancement and upholding of truth’s dignified testimonies to the honor of God’s great, and glorious, and holy name.

JOHN WILBUR.

Hopkinton, R. I., 1st month 16th, 1845.

